

# **ROYALTON, VERMONT**

## **TOWN PLAN**

**2010**

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# Chapter One

## INTRODUCTION

### Foreword by Planning Commission

The Planning Commission has developed this Plan based on the premise that the majority of the citizens of the Town wish to preserve the rural, small town character of Royalton.

It is the purpose of this Plan to provide a statement of how the Town has reached its present state, elements of the Town that should be preserved, recommended policies for future development, and a blueprint for how those policies could be expanded and implemented.

### History of the Town Plan

Royalton was patented in 1769, and settlement of the village began soon thereafter. By 1791 there were 149 families in the Town and by 1807 Royalton village was large enough to support a distinguished academy.

Situated on the White River and its First and Second branches, the Town's 25,815 acres include rich, level, bottom land which has provided a livelihood for generations of farmers. Moving away from the rivers, the land changes quickly to rugged, rocky hillsides which historically limited agricultural, residential and commercial development.

In 1848, the railroad came to the valley and the village of South Royalton came into existence. With the railroad came growth, and South Royalton became a center of commerce for the area.

From 1870 to 1970, Royalton's history is similar to that of most rural Vermont towns. Growth slowed and there was a major out-migration moving west to better farmland and jobs. Population stabilized in the 1900's and remained relatively flat well into the 1960's. Growth and the outside pressures for change were not significant issues facing the Town.

The building of Interstate 89 in the 1970's and the founding of Royalton College, soon to become Vermont Law School, brought profound change. The Interstate reduced traffic to local businesses on Route 14. As growth took place north and south of Royalton along the highway, and especially in the White River/Lebanon/Hanover area, population began to spill over to Royalton, accelerating the Town's growth and putting increased pressure on limited land, public services, school facilities, and economic resources.

Planning was started in Royalton in 1974. The initial planning considerations were centered around flood plain regulations and the preparation of the first Town Plan. After multiple rewrites and positive discussion concerning Royalton's future, the first plan was adopted in 1988 and subsequently re-adopted in 1993. Regional influences and changing community values drive the requirement to re-evaluate the plan on a continuous basis. An extensive revision of the Town Plan was completed by the Planning Commission and

adopted by the voters of Royalton in 1997 and in 2001. A revision was completed by the Planning Commission during 2007, and approved by the voters of Royalton on March 6, 2007. This new revision was completed by the Planning Commission in August 2009, in preparation for an Australian Ballot vote in March 2010.

## **Purpose**

The Royalton Town Plan provides a framework to be used for accomplishing community aspirations. It gives specific guidance, while retaining enough flexibility to be useful when faced with unforeseen circumstances. The Plan states goals, objectives, and recommendations for action that will guide future growth and development of land, public facilities, and services.

Goals, objectives, and recommendations of a plan must be viewed as an integrated, interdependent system of statements that have clear relationships to each other and to the body of the plan. The Town Plan addresses critical areas that relate to growth and development. Goal statements, objectives, and recommendations describing specific action steps begin each chapter.

The definitions of these terms must be made clear for the understanding of each plan section as well as the coordination of the plan sections with each other.

- **Goals** are long-range aspirations which serve to establish the Town's future direction. The "goal" describes the end condition that is sought;
- **Objectives** are a measurable component of a goal which are action-oriented and designed to address outstanding town problems. Objectives are achieved, in part, by implementing planning policies;
- **Recommendations** are courses of action suggested to achieve objectives and may be used to solve existing problems or avoid their recurrence. These may include performance criteria, specific strategies, changes in administrative procedures, or suggestions for further study.
- **Policies** are definite courses of action adopted and followed by a government, institution, body, or individual for the attainment of desired objectives.

The Plan provides a guide for the protection and enhancement of our natural and cultural resources. The Plan aims to help the citizens of Royalton better define and direct the future of their community. It is a planning tool that provides a vision of what the community should be over the next 5 to 10 years.

The Plan is to be used by the Town Boards, Commissions, Departments, residents, and businesses in a number of ways:

1. To provide a framework for planning the future of the Town;
2. To assist in the development of a Capital Budget and Program;
3. To direct the formulation of departmental policies and strategies;

4. To serve as a basis for responding to Act 250 permit requests;
5. To guide decision making in subdivision, site development plans, and conditional use reviews;
6. To present a framework for developing zoning and subdivision bylaws;
7. To supply data and solutions for planning issues;
8. To recommend future planning studies and funding sources.

## **Implementation Strategies**

Adoption of this new Town Plan presents an opportunity to direct the changes that are already occurring in Royalton. The primary tools for directing growth are this Town Plan, the Town's existing by-laws and ordinances, and the volunteer work of Royalton's citizens.

Recommendations are listed at the beginning of each chapter of the Plan. These are actions designed to achieve objectives, carry out policies, and determine priorities. Where possible, the group with primary responsibility for implementing an action is indicated in parentheses.

## **Town Regulations**

The Town of Royalton has an array of regulatory tools to carry out the land use goals and objectives of this Town Plan. Town ordinances must be reviewed and revised based on this Town Plan as well as current needs and conditions. Copies of these ordinances are available at the Town Offices. These revisions, guided by the policies and objectives of the Town Plan, will be extremely important to the future of the Town. They will be based on decisions made with the long-term common good in mind. These tools include:

- Solid Waste Management Implementation Plan – This Plan is under review by the state and describes municipal policy on separation, recovery, collection, removal, storage and disposition of solid waste including recyclables.
- Emergency Management and Disaster Mitigation Plans – The Town has adopted an updated Rapid Response Plan and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan in 2008. The RRP identifies people to contact in the event of an emergency. The PDM Plan identifies the hazards to which the Town is vulnerable and measures to mitigate them.
- Flood Hazard Area Zoning Bylaws - This bylaw was rewritten in 2007 and outlines regulations that apply to any construction or filling in areas of town deemed to be flood hazard zones in accordance with the Flood Insurance Study prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- Official Map – The "official map," as it is called in the Statutes, documents the location and width of existing and proposed highways and drainage ways and the location of all existing and proposed parks, schools and other public facilities

- Highway Policy - This policy has been in effect since August 2001. The policy describes existing road classifications, road reclassification, new road construction standards, road acceptance, Class 4 roads, access roads, highway planning, recreational vehicles, overloads, and maintenance of town highways.
- Highway Access Ordinance - This ordinance was revised and readopted in November 2007. The Ordinance establishes requirements for permits for driveways to be built accessing town roads. Requests are reviewed by the Selectboard for safety and drainage.
- Telecommunications Facilities Ordinance – This ordinance, adopted October 1998, grants the Selectboard authority to regulate the construction, alteration, development and decommissioning of wireless telecommunications facilities within the town.
- Pollution Abatement Facility Ordinance – Royalton has a Pollution Abatement Facility Ordinance which includes an Occupancy/Use permit issued when construction has been completed in compliance with applicable ordinances.
- Sprinkler System Ordinance – The Prudential Committee is currently drafting a Sprinkler System and Use Allocation Ordinance.

Other Town ordinances have been adopted in Royalton to regulate:

- Alcoholic beverages possession and consumption
- Animal control
- Off Road Vehicles
- Non-motorized vehicles
- Road Naming
- Recycling
- Traffic (including parking regulations)

Based on the response to a survey conducted in 2004, the Town should consider adopting modest zoning regulations and a subdivision ordinance. The Town should consider adopting a sign ordinance and standards to regulate aggregate sign size. The Town of Royalton is considering adopting an ordinance to regulate junkyards.

### **Other Regulatory Methods**

**Act 250:** Presently, the State Land Use and Development Law, regulates some land development by requiring permits prior to construction. These permits, issued by the District Environmental Commission, determine the objectives for land development in the Town of Royalton based on the ten permit criteria stated in the law.

By law, the District Environmental Commission must consider Royalton’s Town Plan as input in deciding permit conditions for commercial developments on more than one acre or

for residential development of six or more lots. Also by law, both the Selectboard and the Planning Commission have party status in all Act 250 proceedings involving land in Royalton and may testify on each of the ten criteria. The Town Plan provides the Town and the District Environmental Commission with an important standard for review and comment on Act 250 applications.

**Capital Budget and Program:** The Town does not have a Capital Budget and Program.

### **Non-Regulatory Methods**

The following are techniques of development control and guidance that are implemented by individual residents or property owners.

**Land Trusts:** Land trusts are generally non-profit organizations dedicated to the protection of land resources and can be created to help individuals conserve their land. Property owners can also create a land trust. Because of their non-profit status, most contributions of lands or funds are deductible from federal income taxes.

**Restrictive Covenants:** An individual property owner can achieve the long-term conservation of land through placing development restrictions or covenants in deeds used to transfer land to new owners.

**Use Value Appraisal (“Current Use”) Program:** A State program designed to enable owners of working farms and managed woodlots of over 25 contiguous acres to pay property taxes that are based on the agricultural or forestry value of the land as opposed to the development value of the land.

Many of the recommendations relate to one or more of these existing tools. In addition, the Recommendations focus on new studies to be conducted by the Planning Commission, citizen advisory groups, Town departments, state and regional agencies and others. Recommendations also call for the adoption of an official map, regulations, an Advisory Design Review Process and many other specific actions.

### **Process for Modification and Updating**

The Town Plan is a dynamic document and represents a process just as much as it does a product. The nature of growth and change quickly dates the data contained within the Plan. The Plan must be readopted at least every five years. When possible, updated statistics should be added to the plan being readopted. Of course, other revisions and modifications will most likely be needed to reflect changing conditions. While the Planning Commission is responsible for maintaining the Town Plan, any individual or group may initiate changes. Title 24 of Vermont Statutes Annotated (V.S.A.) Section 4384 details the procedures to be followed for the adoption of plans and any amendments. \*1

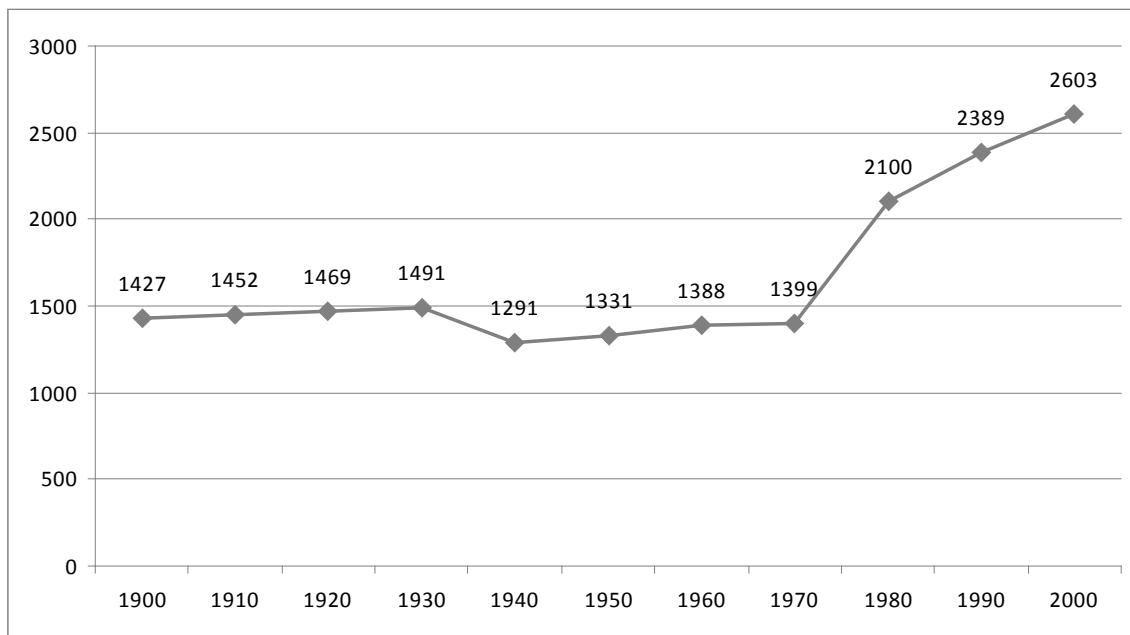
1. See 24 V.S.A. Section 4384 for directions on how to pursue a Town Planning initiative.

## Chapter Two POPULATION

Existing population characteristics, past trends and future projections are all major considerations in the town planning process. An increasing population within a community is in most cases accompanied by an increase in demands for municipal services. One main purpose of proper community planning is to anticipate, plan for and guide population growth in such a way that the increasing demand for municipal services does not outweigh the town's ability to accommodate this growth. Another purpose of proper community planning is to anticipate and have a plan for the other extreme of population loss.

Royalton has been experiencing population growth since the 1970s up until 2000. The following graph illustrates Royalton's population pattern over a 100-year period. The population figures have been taken from the U.S. Census 2000.

**Figure 1: Town of Royalton Population (1900 - 2000)**



Source: Center for Rural Studies, 2000 Census Population & Housing

As illustrated above, Royalton's population grew slowly and steadily between 1900 and 1970, except for a 13% decrease from 1930 to 1940 (200 people). Between 1970 to 2000, however, the population expanded by 86%, or by 1,204 in total.

Royalton's population growth during the 1970-2006 period is compared below in Figure 2 to the growth in the surrounding towns. According to these data, Royalton experienced a higher rate of growth than all of its neighbors during the first 30 years, except the towns of Sharon and Strafford. Census population projections for the years 2000 to 2006

predict that Royalton’s population may decline slightly, but would decline more than all the surrounding towns. This projected negative growth trend is similar among the other towns.

**Figure 2: Population Change in Royalton & Surrounding Towns (1970 - 2006)**

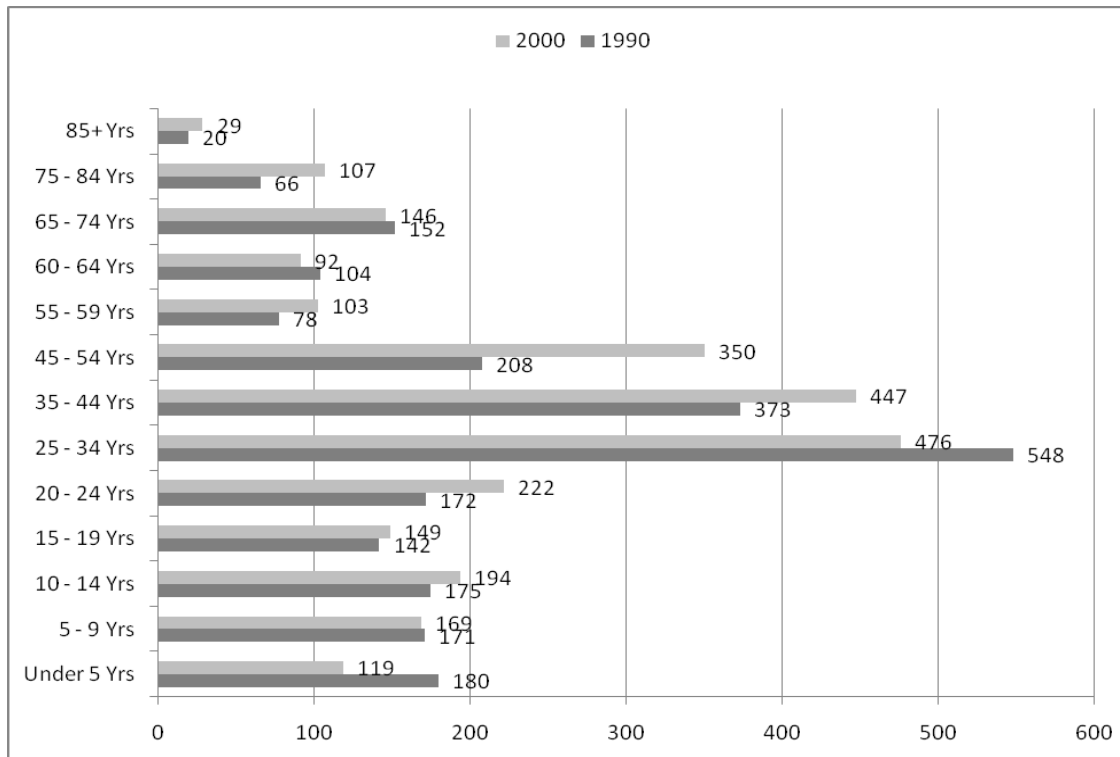
|                 | <b>1970<br/>Census</b> | <b>2000<br/>Census</b> | <b>1970-2000<br/>percent change</b> | <b>2006<br/>Census Estimate</b> |
|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Royalton</b> | <b>1,399</b>           | <b>2,603</b>           | <b>86.06%</b>                       | <b>2,511</b>                    |
| Barnard         | 569                    | 958                    | 68.37%                              | 964                             |
| Bethel          | 1,347                  | 1,968                  | 46.10%                              | 1,950                           |
| Pomfret         | 620                    | 979                    | 57.90%                              | 986                             |
| Randolph        | 3,882                  | 4,853                  | 25.01%                              | 5,091                           |
| Sharon          | 541                    | 1,411                  | 160.81%                             | 1,366                           |
| Strafford       | 536                    | 1,045                  | 94.96%                              | 1,103                           |
| Tunbridge       | 791                    | 1,309                  | 65.49%                              | 1,329                           |

Source: Center for Rural Studies, 2000 Census Population & Housing

As indicated in Figure 3 on the next page, between 1990 and 2000 population increases occurred primarily in the 35-59 year-old range, which reflects the ongoing effect of the baby boomer generation. In particular, the 45-54 year old segment grew by 68%, more than any other segment. This increase of population in this age group may in part explain declining enrollment in the Royalton school system (see Chapter 8, Education) as families in their late 40s to mid 50s often have children who are in high school or college.

Three other segments of the population also grew by double digits during this period: 10-14 year olds, 20-24 year olds, and people 75 years and older. The increase in numbers of adolescents may be related to an almost 20% growth rate in the number 35-44 year olds in town. It is likely that the increase in people in their early 20s is explained by growth of the student population at Vermont Law School. And lastly, the 75-84 year old group has grown by about 62%, and the number of residents 85 years and over grew by 45%. This growth may be attributed to second home owners retiring to Royalton, and the trend for seniors to age in place.

**Figure 3: Town of Royalton Population Profile 1990 & 2000**



Source: Center for Rural Studies, 2000 Census Population & Housing

## **Chapter Three**

# **NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES**

### **Goals:**

1. To identify, protect and preserve the natural and historic resources of Royalton.
2. To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife and land resources.
3. To support and encourage the protection of all the waters in the White River watershed.
4. To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest businesses.

### **Objectives:**

1. Carefully review all development projects to ensure minimal negative impact on Royalton's natural and historic resources.
2. Actively plan for the conservation of unique resources.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Continue to assemble accurate maps to assist in proper planning and in the review of development proposals.
2. Study and develop strategies to protect long-term viability of agricultural and forest lands.
3. Continue to encourage the use of locally grown products - particularly in the local schools.
4. Develop regulations to protect natural and historic resources of outstanding value from adverse development that would impair their character or quality, and to encourage development that preserves our resources as listed later in this Chapter.
5. The Town should appoint a historic preservation committee and seek Certified Local Government Status to secure funding and training for historic preservation programs and projects. The committee should serve in an advisory capacity for the Planning Commission and the Selectboard.
6. A survey and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places should be completed for Royalton Village. An architectural survey of Foxville should be undertaken.
7. Historic Landmarks not yet designated should be identified and designation secured.
8. A survey of Route 14 and Route 110 for nomination as possible scenic highways should be undertaken.
9. Adopt regulations governing the extraction of earth resources.

## **Policies:**

### 1. Land Development Criteria

- All land development shall be conducted in a manner to prevent erosion.
- All land development on slopes greater than 25 percent shall be severely restricted; in addition, vegetative cover shall be retained where possible and re-established on disturbed soils.
- New construction shall be consistent with existing development patterns in terms of scale, massing, building materials, siting, signage, landscaping, and density.
- Development will generally avoid areas with shallow soils.
- No habitation will be permitted in areas where the depth to seasonal high water table is 0 to 1½ feet.

### 2. Resource Lands and Natural Areas

- Promote continued use of agricultural and forest land for sustained farming and forestry activities.
- Development within agricultural districts may be required to be clustered to protect important resource land.
- Development within shoreline areas of streams, rivers, or ponds will be compatible with the natural beauty of the area, protect existing vegetation, and be set back sufficiently to prevent erosion and pollution. Visual and physical access to the water bodies should be retained.
- Buffer strips should be utilized where they may help preserve a natural areas value for education, science, research, aesthetics, and recreation.
- Public funds will be directed away from development that could harm fragile natural resource areas.
- Critical wildlife habitat designated in the plan shall be protected from incompatible uses.
- Good forestry practices as defined by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation are encouraged of all forestry operations conducted within Royalton. Any subdivision of forests should result in parcels of such dimension, geographic and topographic configuration as to be practical and economic for good forestry management and that, in such subdivision, access to all resulting and remaining forests in Royalton is assured.
- Earth resource extraction operations shall be conducted in such a manner as to be consistent with the goals in this chapter and the requirements of Act 250.

### 3. Areas Potentially Hazardous to Human Life and Health

- No land alteration that adversely interferes with the natural flow of water to surface waters will be allowed.

- Development which will contaminate any water supply will not be permitted.
  - All development other than uses and structures essential to the operation of agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, and wildlife protection will be restricted in floodways.
4. Historic Resources
- Reuse of historic structures and their environs is to be encouraged. Rehabilitation, and applicable supporting federal tax incentives, should be carefully considered before demolition is permitted. Examples of adaptive reuse include the Brightwood House and The Royalton Academy.
  - Persons reusing buildings within the historic districts are encouraged to use the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects as guidelines for planning repairs and alterations.
  - Commercial and public activities should be located in existing buildings within the existing village centers. Strip development is generally discouraged. New construction along Routes 14, 107, and 110 shall be compatible with existing and neighboring setbacks, signs, parking, and building materials.

## **Natural and Scenic Resources**

Natural and scenic areas in Royalton record geologic history and reflect the past and present use of our land resources. Such resources are greatly appreciated by the citizens of Royalton as the source of much of the community's beauty and character. The following features have been identified, without limitation, as contributing to the essential rural character of the Town even as growth and change may occur.

## **Primary Agricultural Land**

As used in this Plan, "primary agricultural land" means soils which have a potential for growing food and forage crops, are sufficiently well drained to allow sowing and harvesting with mechanized equipment, are well supplied with plant nutrients or highly responsive to the use of fertilizer, and have few limitations for cultivation, or have limitations which may be overcome. In order to qualify as primary agricultural soils, the average slope of the land containing such soils cannot exceed 15%, and such land must be of a size capable of supporting or contributing to an economic agricultural operation.

Because it is already cleared, open and dry, primary agricultural land is also highly desirable for development. Preserving these lands will protect an important part of the Town's rural character and scenic beauty, provide a local food source, and encourage the continuance of farming as a local business activity.

According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture by the USDA, Royalton has a total of 66 working farms. Of these, 22 farms were located on less than 50 acres, and 44 were larger farms. There were six dairy farms, 23 cattle farms, six sheep and goat farms, and 28 crop farms (including greenhouses). Horse farms, though not listed in the census, also account for

a substantial part of our town's agricultural activity. Compared to the 1997 Census of Agriculture, the total number of farms in Royalton has increased by nearly 25%. There has been a 57% increase in the number of farms on less than 50 acres, and an 11% increase in the number of larger farms. The number of farms harvesting cropland has also increased since 1997 by nearly 29%.

### **Productive Forest Soils and Secondary Agricultural Soils**

Vermont's Act 250 defines "productive forest soils" as those soils which are not primary agricultural soils but which have a reasonable potential for commercial forestry and which have not been developed. In order to qualify as productive forest soils, the land containing such soils shall be of a size and location, relative to adjoining land uses, natural condition, and ownership patterns so that those soils will be capable of supporting or contributing to a commercial forestry operation. Land use on those soils may include commercial timber harvesting and specialized forest uses, such as maple sugar or Christmas tree production.

Act 250 defines "primary agricultural soils" as soils which have a potential for growing food and forage crops, are sufficiently well drained to allow sowing and harvesting with mechanized equipment, are well supplied with plant nutrients or highly responsive to the use of fertilizer, and have few limitations for cultivation or limitations which may be easily overcome. The definition includes a characterization of the average slope of the land as well as its size.

As used in this Plan, "productive forest soils and secondary agricultural soils" means soils which are not primary agricultural soils but which have reasonable potential for commercial forestry or commercial agriculture and which have not yet been developed. If a tract of land includes other forests or agricultural soils, only the productive forest soils or secondary agricultural soils shall be affected by criteria relating to such soils.

It is recognized the forests of Royalton are an asset and important natural resource. Forests provide fuel for our homes and lumber for wood-based industries, stabilize water and soil, provide wildlife habitat, are a recreational resource, and play a vital role in providing the oxygen in the air we breathe through photosynthesis.

According to the Royalton Listers, 71 parcels of "woodland" were reported in 2009, which is defined in the Vermont Department of Taxes Lister's Handbook as "undeveloped land that is mostly wooded." A total of 8,320 acres of land were enrolled in the State's Current Use program in 2009. The Current Use program taxes at "use value" enrolled parcels with at least 25 contiguous acres of forest land managed according to state standards and an approved forest management plan, or at least 25 contiguous acres in active agricultural use; or smaller parcels which generate at least \$2,000 annually from the sale of farm crops; or actively used agricultural land owned by or leased to a farmer. Towns are reimbursed by the State for the reduction of property taxes caused by reduced Use Value.

### **Earth Resources**

The use and management of Royalton's earth and mineral resources are matters of public

good. “Earth resources” are naturally occurring materials taken from the soil or the strata beneath. In Royalton, identified earth resources are water, sand and gravel. Steps must be taken by those using these resources to avoid or minimize any adverse impact due to noise, dust, traffic, transportation congestion, or roadway deterioration and ensure the site will be restored to an acceptable condition once work has been completed. Utilization of these resources should be as such that it does not significantly inhibit or conflict with other existing or planned land uses, or are in conflict with other stated goals in this Plan. There are two primary operating gravel pits – the Carpenter pit and the Crawford pit – as well as several other smaller pits in Royalton as of 2008. Operations should be as such to provide for the wise and efficient use of Royalton's earth resources and to facilitate the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the area.

## **Groundwater**

Virtually everyone relies upon groundwater for domestic and commercial water supply. Protecting the primary water supply requires protection of the groundwater from contamination by protecting surface waters, wetlands, and watershed and recharge areas. Contamination sources of concern include old industrial and town solid waste disposal sites, leaking underground fuel storage tanks, continuing use of improper industrial floor drains, accidental fuel or chemical spills, poor agricultural practices, road salt, and failed septic systems.

The groundwater that supplies Royalton’s public wells (see Water Service, described on page 19) and private wells is pumped or pushed to the surface from an underground aquifer. An aquifer is an underground area of saturated sand, gravel, or fractured bedrock that is permeable enough to yield water through wells or springs. The surface area that drains into an aquifer is called a recharge area. Water tables are typically less than 10 feet below land surface, soils are thin except along valley floors, and fractured crystalline bedrock provides little in terms of filtration. Given the present level of ground water mapping in Vermont, there is little data to distinguish between the vulnerable and less than vulnerable resource.

## **Shorelands**

As used in this Plan, “shorelands” means publicly owned ponds, and those lands which border rivers and the tributaries which feed into those rivers. These areas are natural extensions of these water bodies. They retain excessive amounts of water occurring as runoff during heavy rains and spring thaws, and impede the velocity of water flow during floods.

It is recognized that the White River, its tributaries and the resulting valley is a significant natural resource of Royalton. The White River, beginning in Granville, flows into Royalton from the west, where it is joined by the Second Branch at the intersection of Route 14 and Route 107, and joined by the First Branch flowing from Chelsea at the intersection of Route 14 and Route 110. From Royalton, it runs parallel to Route 14 to Sharon. Brooks which serve as tributaries to the river include Broad Brook, Sewall Brook, Lyman Brook, and Joiner Brook. These brooks are often fed by wetlands, ponds and beaver ponds near the top of the hills and ridges. The water quality of the White River has improved greatly since the

installation of sewage treatment plants in upriver towns, (Bethel, in 1983, and Royalton, in 1979). Important public access areas to the White River include Sinclair's Rocks, Foxstand, Royalton Bridge, Paine's beach, the Carpenter Land, and the Vermont Law School parking lot. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, and the White River Partnership are working together to encourage land use development practices that avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on the White River, its tributaries and wetlands.

## **Natural Areas**

The blend of small scale human activity among the green hills rising like waves above the White River Valley give Royalton much natural beauty which provides great satisfaction and pride to the community's citizens. The Kent's Ledge area is the most striking of these areas, but equally worthy of preservation are the Elephant, Russ Hill, Royalton Hill, the Pinnacle behind Royalton Village, and Broad Brook Mountain.

Development has occurred historically on the valley floor, along the town roads that ascend the hills, and along the town roads that traverse the ridges. This has allowed the hills and steep brook valleys to remain undeveloped and used for forestry, hunting, fishing, trapping and other outdoor recreation activities.

Macintosh Pond (33 acres) is a State natural area located within Royalton. Other publicly conserved lands in Royalton include the Sarnoff property (55 acres), which has been renamed the Royalton Town Forest, and several other smaller lots.

Many parcels of land are privately conserved in Royalton, using the stewardship services of organizations such as the Upper Valley Land Trust, as well as through private conservation easements.

## **Recreation Lands**

In Vermont, the public has been accustomed to using privately owned lands for hunting, fishing, and hiking and, more recently, snowmobiling and skiing. In the past there was little restriction of public access to private land and, indeed, State laws on landowner liability encourage landowners to allow this access. The continued use of these lands for recreation is a matter to be settled between owners and would-be users, and should result in a pact made and honored by the users to be responsible and considerate in their transit of private lands.

Public or semi-public recreational lands include the Royalton School fields, Paine's Beach, Carpenter Land, the two village greens, and various river accesses.

## **Scenic Areas**

As used in this Plan, "scenic areas" are areas which by general consensus are considered visual assets to the Town such as vistas, landscapes, sections of roads and highways, and undeveloped river frontages. These scenic areas help to define the present character of Royalton and are an asset which attracts visitors who, while they are here, provide income to Town retailers, restaurants, and inns. Specific areas recognized include: the White River and

its branches and the valley farms along the same; views from Dairy Hill Road looking west, Russ Hill Road looking west, North Road looking west and north, Royalton Hill Road looking north, Johnson Hill Road looking east and north, and Broad Brook Mountain looking east and west; views of the Elephant, Kent's Ledge, and Sawtooth Mountain; views of and from the village greens; and views from the bridges across the White River and views from I-89 of the South Royalton and Royalton Villages, the White River, and the open lands in this corridor. Development in these areas shall be in a scale, size, land use type, architectural style, and density that is consistent with the land use of the area and does not significantly diminish the scenic value of the area. The aesthetic appeal of a scene shall not be diluted or despoiled by highly visible, skylined development out of character with the surrounding areas or creating a significant view barrier.

## **Historic Resources**

Historic sites and structures are the visual history of Royalton's cultural, social, and economic life. Buildings, structures, and historic settings, such as the two Town commons, roads, and cemeteries provide a source of pride, economic gain, and personal enjoyment for present and future generations.

Historic Landmarks include the Joseph Smith Birthplace, South Royalton Village (listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district). Royalton Village has been declared eligible for the National Register, and Mill Village (listed on the National Register as a significant complex).

Further identification of existing historic resources can be found from books by Nash, Lovejoy, and articles on the Royalton Raid. Existing maps include Sanborn Insurance Company maps, dated 1894, located in the Town Offices in South Royalton as well as the Vermont Historical Society. Existing surveys include a 1974 Historic Sites and Structures Survey of Royalton conducted by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. Deeds and other land records can be found in the Town Offices in South Royalton.

Districts which should be reviewed for eligibility include Foxville (North Royalton). Historic sites worthy of review include cemeteries, Route 14, Route 110, mills, district schools, creameries, distilleries, kilns, electric power sites, caves (Oliver's cave and stone chambers), old roads, bridges, and railroad roadbeds. Appendix I provides a list of currently recognized historic sites and structures.

## **Criteria for Historic Structures**

When considering whether a structure or site is historic, the following will be taken into consideration:

**Age** - Local buildings which predate the 1927 flood can generally be considered for designation. The National Register of Historic Places usually expects a property to be at least 50 years old.

**Historical significance** - The structure or site should be tied to local, state or national

trends or events. The Royalton Raid is an event; the coming of the Railroad and parallel construction is a trend.

**Architectural significance** - The structure should be representative of a local, state or national architectural style. Its elements should reflect architectural details appropriate to its age and style. Significance may be attributable to engineering excellence or integrity of materials in use during a given period of time.

Criteria applied by the National Register of Historic Places and the Vermont State Historic Sites and Structures Register may apply as well.

## Chapter Four

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Community facilities are those facilities that are publicly owned and maintained structures, land, and equipment as well as any services related to them, and any facilities that are operated by private enterprise for the benefit of the whole community.

### **Goal:**

1. To plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of community facilities and services to meet future needs of the citizens and visitors of Royalton.

### **Objectives:**

1. Growth and development should not exceed the capacities of local facilities and services.
2. Any expansion of infrastructure shall be made to support development in designated growth areas and to discourage strip development or sprawl.
3. Infrastructure expansion should take place with a minimum impact on the aesthetic quality of the community. Utility lines should be buried wherever feasible.

### **Recommendations:**

1. **Public Lands:** The Town should develop management plans for each community parcel and incorporate these into the Town's Capital Budget and Program.
2. **Public Safety Services:** The Town should periodically reconsider the adequacy of these services.
3. **Fire and Water District:** The District should consider differential rates for residential and commercial water users, although there may be increased difficulty in metering. Water-saving fixtures should be made available.
4. **Emergency Management:** The Town should increase public awareness of their Emergency Management Plans, including the Town's Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Plan, Emergency Operations Plans (EOP), and Rapid Response Plan (RRP).
5. **Sewer and Storm Drainage Facilities:** Develop a capital budget/current operating expense plan for renovations and/or replacement of sewer and storm drainage facilities. The Town should consider providing different sewer rates for residential and commercial users.
6. **Solid Waste:** Continue educational efforts to encourage recycling by all members of the community.
7. **Recreational Facilities:** Develop a Town recreation plan incorporating existing facilities and the newly developed Carpenter Land.

**Policies:**

1. Management of Town owned property shall comply with this Plan, in addition to any applicable Town ordinances and policies.
2. Provisions for emergency services must be considered in all development. Loop roads shall be utilized whenever possible. Cul-de-sacs or hammerheads may be used only when no other option exists.
3. Enact, amend and enforce local ordinances involving traffic and parking.
4. Development must be coordinated with the Town's Emergency Management Plan.
5. Development must provide for adequate storm drainage.
6. Maintain recreational land to encourage optimal use.
7. The Town should regularly assess public facility needs.
8. The Town shall maintain its web site: [www.royaltonvt.com](http://www.royaltonvt.com).
9. The Town shall encourage the implementation of affordable high speed internet access, such as the fiber-optic network that is being developed in the Upper Valley region.

**Public Lands and Buildings**

Publicly held properties in Royalton include cemeteries, town buildings and corresponding land, Alumni Field, and several other publicly owned parcels. According to the 2009 Town Report, approximately 120 acres of land are held by the Town. This includes the Town Forest, which is currently being used for forestry and environmental education. Town owned buildings include the 1840 Town House, the Royalton Center Schoolhouse, the Royalton Memorial Library, the Royalton Town Offices, 250 acres of land owned by the Fire District, the Hope Property purchased for the future Town offices and fire/rescue, the historic gazebo on the town green, the Old Royalton Bank, Royalton Academy, and the Ellis Bandstand. A complete list is printed in the Town Report. The Library and Town Offices are also publicly owned buildings that require routine maintenance and that must be of adequate size to meet the needs of the Town.

**Fire, Rescue and Public Safety Services**

The Royalton Fire District No. 1 is a municipal entity organized to provide water and fire services within the District boundaries. The District's elected Prudential Committee oversees the South Royalton Fire Department, South Royalton Rescue Squad and Water Department. Fire and rescue operations are funded by town appropriations, user fees for the rescue service, and contributions and private donations from Royalton and Sharon.

Fire protection for the Town is provided by the South Royalton Volunteer Fire Department, an all volunteer department. The firehouse is located in South Royalton Village. The fire department is independently organized as Royalton Fire District No. 1, formed in 1884, and is not under the Town's jurisdiction. Currently recognized fire protection problems

include: development in areas distant from the village of South Royalton, development on class 3 and 4 roads, tightly packed trailer parks, distance from water sources (rivers, hydrants and/or fire ponds), and inadequate snow removal.

The South Royalton Rescue Squad provides ambulance service to Royalton, Sharon, and special local events. The Squad operates as an independent component of the Fire Department. The ambulance is kept in the South Royalton Firehouse. Emergency services are provided by highly trained personnel. The Fire Department and the Rescue Squad function as first back up to Tunbridge Fire Department and First Branch Rescue.

Royalton has two elected Town Constables. Policing activities are provided by the Royalton Police Department, which was established in 2005. Currently there is one full time officer. Back up is provided by Windsor County Sheriff's Office and the Vermont State Police.

### **Water Service**

The Water Department, part of the Royalton Fire District No. 1, serves commercial, institutional and residential users in the District. All users are charged the same rate, which was \$50/year meter fee, plus \$0.84 per 100 gallons in FY 2007. There are currently 438 total meters in the system serving 396 housing units.

While the Water Department can levy taxes, it has chosen to augment its water resources by completing the White River infiltration gallery project in 2005. In 2007-8, the District began planning for source protection and forest resources management. The final Plan will protect the District's water resources and define recreational use of the District's 230 acre parcel of land. A second initiative is a comprehensive engineering study to guide the Prudential Committee in the maintenance and enhancement of the water system. As part of this effort, the Prudential Committee is drafting a fire sprinkler system ordinance.

### **Emergency Management**

Royalton has an Emergency Management Coordinator and an Emergency Management Plans that include a Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Plan, an Emergency Operations Plans (EOP), and a Rapid Response Plan (RRP). The PDM Plan takes into account potential hazards on the interstate (vehicle and truck transport accidents), the railroad tracks (derailments and collisions), the river (flash floods, ice jams), and bulk fuel storage situations, in addition to more normal events. The RRP outlines mutual aid, coordination, and communication protocols with other neighboring towns. Emergency management efforts are complicated by the large percentage of transient residents.

### **Telecommunications and Other Towers**

To fulfill many of the goals of this plan including protecting scenic vistas and natural areas, preserving the rural character and appearance of the Town, protecting undeveloped lands, protecting watersheds and assuring the health and safety of the community, it is in the interest of the Town that the proliferation of communications, transmissions and wind towers

and antennas be minimized through the sharing or co-location of towers; and that they be encouraged to locate in non-residential areas and away from visually sensitive areas, prominent scenic areas, historic areas and the White River. The citizens of Royalton have consistently desired to maintain the rural and scenic character of our community. The undeveloped ridgelines and mountains such as Kent's Ledge and the ridge from Kent's Ledge towards Royalton village, particularly as viewed from the floor of the White River Valley, are scenic and valuable to the character of the Town. Protection of these areas from intrusive developments such as telecommunication towers are matters of public good.

The following policies for the creation of all towers shall apply:

1. In order to minimize tower proliferation, it is the policy of the Town that applicants exhaust all reasonable options for sharing space on existing towers prior to proposing new towers and related facilities. The principle of co-location is the favored alternative. In making such a determination on the feasibility of co-location, prospective developers shall conduct a duly diligent effort to evaluate space available on existing towers, the tower owners' ability to lease space, geographic service area requirements, mechanical or electrical incompatibilities, the comparative costs of co-location and new construction, and regulatory limitations.
2. It is the Policy of the Town that existing wireless service providers be required to allow other providers to co-locate on existing facilities, subject to reasonable terms and conditions.
3. One of the Town's principal scenic qualities is its ridge lines and mountainsides. These areas are significant contributors to the maintenance and enjoyment of rural character. These ridges are predominately undeveloped and provide an unbroken skyline viewed from the valley floor. It is the policy of the Town that use of ridges for telecommunication and wind towers and related facilities needs to be undertaken in a manner that will not detract or adversely affect these scenic values. Accordingly, protection of these areas from insensitive developments are matters of public good. To minimize conflict with scenic values, facility siting, design and construction shall employ the following principles:
  - a) Towers shall be sited in areas not highly visible to the public such as roads, residential areas, public use areas, shorelines or lands immediately adjunct to the White River, and public recreation areas such as hiking trails;
  - b) Towers shall be located in forested areas or be sufficiently landscaped to screen the lower portions of the towers and related fixtures from public vantage points;
  - c) Towers shall utilize materials, architectural styles, solar schemes, lighting, mass and other design elements to promote aesthetic compatibility with surrounding uses and to avoid adverse visual impacts (such as the necessity of aviation lighting);
  - d) Where prominent views of a site exist, towers shall be located below the grade of the ridge so as not to exceed the elevation of the immediate ridge, in no case shall towers be located on peaks and ridges that are locally significant or regional focal points;

- e) Where construction of access roads are involved, these shall be situated to follow the contour of the land to avoid open fields or meadows, and to avoid disruption or damage to the watershed.
  - f) When towers no longer are used for the purposes for which originally constructed, they shall be dismantled and removed from the original site. Local and state land use permits shall incorporate removal of inactive fixtures as a condition of approval, unless an acceptable new use exists.
4. It is the policy of the Town that towers not be illuminated by artificial means and not display strobe lights.
  5. It is the policy of the Town that the height for towers, antennae, and tower-related fixtures not exceed 50 feet above the average height of the tree line within the immediate vicinity of a wireless communication facility.
  6. It is the policy of the Town that in planning for telecommunication facilities, due consideration be given to the environmental limitations of any given site. Impacts of the use on wildlife habitats, soil erosion, forestry and agricultural lands, and similar resources shall be carefully addressed. Projects that materially impact these resources are discouraged.
  7. It is the policy of the Town that when telecommunication projects are situated on lands owned by the State, design plans be compatible with current Management Plans for Public Lands adopted by the Agency of Natural Resources.
  8. It is the policy of the Town that the policies of this section serve as a clear written community standard intended to preserve the aesthetics or scenic beauty of the Town of Royalton. Accordingly, it is the intent that this section be utilized by the District Environmental Commission, the Natural Resources Board, or the Public Service Board as part of an aesthetics analysis for all wireless or other broadband telecommunications facilities, particularly those developed under Act 79. These policies shall be used, in part, to determine whether or not a project fits the context in which it will be located, possesses acceptable visibility features, and has acceptable levels of scenic impact.

### **Sewer and Storm Drainage Facilities**

The Town's Pollution Abatement Facility is located 1.2 miles south of South Royalton Village. The capacity of the system is 70,000 gallons daily. Billing for use of the sewer facility is based on the water meter reading. There is a single rate for users. Presently some portion of the fees are contributed to a capital reserve fund.

New installation is currently accomplished by outside contract. New connections pay a one-time fee. Connection requirements are detailed in the Royalton Sewer User Ordinance.

All individual sewage disposal systems are regulated by the State of Vermont on-site wastewater & potable water supply system program, effective July 1, 2007. As a result of this new program, a state permit is needed for most repairs, upgrades, and new construction of

on-site wastewater treatment and disposal facilities, on-site potable water supplies, and connections to municipal water distribution and wastewater collection systems.

### **Highway Department and Town Garage Facilities**

Royalton has two town garage buildings: the town garage on Route 14 in Royalton village built in 2003 and a three-bay shed.

Capital equipment includes various trucks and other road maintenance equipment. There is a Capital Reserve Fund for replacement of vehicles based on hourly use.

Vehicle and person-time, culverts, gravel, sand, etc. are charged to the Highway budget and charged specifically to each single road. This record enables the Department to track any roads for which annual maintenance is apparently insufficient. A culvert inventory was taken in the fall of 2000 in which culverts were located and recorded, including length, size and condition to help the town with maintenance

### **Solid Waste**

In 1970, the Bethel-Royalton Solid Waste Management Facility, a recycling and transfer facility, began operation. The old landfill was formally capped in 1993. The facility was designed for the alliance of towns formed by Royalton, Bethel, Stockbridge, Pittsfield, Hancock, Rochester and Barnard, who operate under a Solid Waste Management Implementation Plan as required by the State. The Solid Waste Implementation Plan was renewed and approved by the State of Vermont on September 25, 2008. The Solid Waste Facility is certified by the State, under which its activities, estimated quantities of recyclables and solid wastes are regulated. The costs for operating the facility are entirely paid by user fees with its operating budgets published annually. The Bethel and Royalton Selectboards jointly manage the facilities including setting user fees and borrowing for operating costs. In addition to setting the rates, Bethel and Royalton are the owners of all facilities and responsible for any bonds. Other alliance towns have a formal advisory role. The State requires that the Facility have an education component and hold household hazardous waste collection days.

### **Recreation Facilities**

Beyond the natural recreational opportunities afforded the Town by the White River and its tributaries which can be accessed from several public roads, and the surrounding hills and forests, the Town has formal recreational areas at the High School and fields, with improvement on the Carpenter land. Those areas can be scheduled for public school, community, and Vermont Law School use.

Royalton has a Recreation Committee that provides social and physical activities for all ages. The summer program for children includes swimming lessons, concerts, seasonal parties for children, and various other programs.

## **Religious Institutions**

There are six churches located within Royalton. Many other religious institutions meet in neighboring towns.

## **Cemeteries**

The Town has thirteen cemeteries and burial lots located in various places in the Town. The elected Cemetery Commissioners oversee the maintenance and operation of the thirteen town cemeteries and burial lots. Two cemeteries have private boards. Four cemeteries, Branchview, Havens, Pleasant Hill and Riverview, still have burial lots available.

## **Libraries and Cultural Institutions**

Royalton Memorial Library in South Royalton has experienced growth and has expanded hours of operation while the Royalton Branch Library in Royalton village has closed. Patron visits and circulation has increased, children's services continue to expand, with outreach programs going strong. The library continues to borrow over 400 books quarterly from the state regional library, increasing their non-fiction collection and offering a wider variety of current literatures. The library hopes to expand in the near future. The library is regularly used as a meeting place for community groups and overflow from the town office.

Royalton Town Band has been serenading the townspeople for more than fifty years. Currently there are about fifty members, with perhaps thirty playing in any one concert. The Town Band gives eight concerts in Town each season plus other out of Town appearances.

The Royalton Academy Building houses the South Royalton Senior Center, Central Vermont Council on Aging, Royalton Academy Pre-School and offices for the Senior Center, Royalton Civic Center, Royalton Civics Club, White River Partnership, the Vermont Council on Aging, and the Royalton Academy Preschool. Organizations use the Academy for regular meetings, and the building is available for short-term rentals to individuals and organizations.

## **Health and Social Services**

Royalton is served by the following health facilities: private practitioners in South Royalton Village, Gifford Family Health Center, located on Route 107, Sharon Health Center on Route 14 in Sharon, Gifford Hospital in Randolph; Alice Peck Day hospital and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, NH. Other care givers servicing the area include the Visiting Nurse Alliance of Vermont and New Hampshire, Mental Health Services of Southeastern Vermont, the Clara Martin Center, Safeline, Central Vermont Community Action, the Vermont Center for Independent Living, Eye Care For You, the Family Place, and Health Connections of the Upper Valley. "Health Hub", a clinic within the South Royalton School, is operated by the South Royalton School-Based Health Clinic, Inc., and provides a wide variety of services and referrals to students.

The Royalton Senior Citizens Center is run in cooperation with the Vermont Council on Aging from offices at the Royalton Academy Building. It offers senior advocacy, senior

companions, legal and tax services, home delivered meals, community meals, and the Senior Center in Royalton Village.

### **Childcare**

In 2003, the Vermont Legislature added a thirteenth goal to Chapter 117. “To ensure the availability of safe and affordable child care and to integrate child care issues into the planning process, including child care financing, infrastructure, business assistance for child care providers, and child care work force development.” There are currently five registered licensed child care providers in Royalton as of April 2008. There are also several in the surrounding towns of Sharon, Randolph and Strafford. Childcare resources are believed to be adequate at this time. Safe and affordable childcare should be available. Royalton supports licensed private childcare centers to meet the childcare needs of its residents, consistent with its goals to support development of home occupations throughout the Town.

# Chapter Five

## ECONOMY

### Introduction

The term "economy" refers to income, jobs and production, as well as the resources and activities that involve or affect the town. The economy has a direct impact on the tax structure and well-being of the residents of Royalton, as well as on municipal services and facilities such as roads and schools. Therefore, the purpose of economic planning is to provide a balanced and equitable tax base for the town and to ensure availability of jobs that are compatible with the skills of town residents and promote their upward growth.

### Goal:

1. To develop guidelines to provide a strong and diverse economy consistent with the preservation of Royalton's rural character.

### Objectives:

1. To maintain the health and vitality of the Town's home occupations, businesses and small industries.
2. To continue to have the village centers serve as focal points for commerce, culture and residences.
3. To promote economic diversity and expand economic opportunities by allowing environmentally benign light industries and professions.
4. To encourage the continued operations of agriculture and forestry businesses in Town.

### Recommendations:

1. Continue to identify appropriate sites for commercial and industrial development.
2. Develop and fund a Capital Budget and Program to plan for the future infrastructure needs, facilities, and services of the Town.
3. Consider developing a fee ordinance for projects that require expanded Town services.
4. Expansion of community facilities and services should be sited in economic growth centers.
5. Efforts to strengthen and diversify Royalton's economy should include cooperating with regional and state commissions.
6. Strip development is not encouraged along Route 14 and Route 107. Future development shall be consistent with existing development and infrastructure. Further guidelines may be found in Chapter Nine, Transportation, and in Appendix II.
7. Participate in the EC Fiber Network to allow expansion of high speed internet into all

homes in town, allowing growth of home businesses.

8. Develop a report on the Revolving Loan Fund performance to date so the Town can better target future use of the fund to support Town goals.
9. Continue to re-certify the Town's Village Center Designations.

**Policies:**

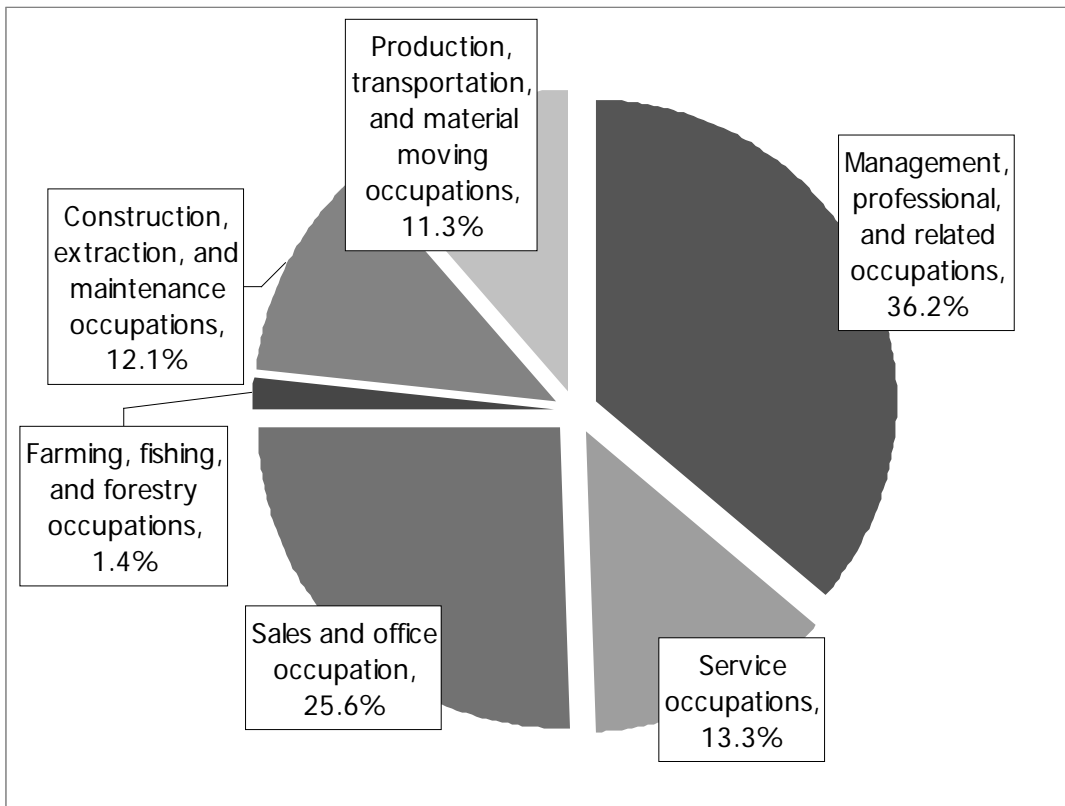
1. It is the policy of Royalton to explore only economic development opportunities which do not compromise the quality of life found in Town.
2. It is the policy of Royalton to coordinate with neighboring communities to secure the proper balance between population, employment, and housing.

**Locations of Economic Activity**

Historically, Royalton has served as a local economic hub for commercial and industrial activity for area towns in general. A major portion of its working resident population is now employed outside of the community. Currently, Royalton's economy base consists primarily of educational, health and social services; professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services; retail trade; construction; manufacturing; and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services as illustrated in Figure 4. The two largest sectors in the 2000 Royalton economy were management occupations (36%) and sales and office occupations (26%). Together they accounted for more than half of all the occupations employing the residents of Royalton.

The East Central Vermont Community Fiber Network is working with Royalton and other Upper Valley towns to establish a universal, open-access, financially self-sustaining broadband communications system to provide communications services, including high-speed internet, telephone and cable television, to the residents, businesses and institutions of these towns. This service will greatly aid economic development in the Upper Valley, allowing more people to work at their homes.

**Figure 4: Occupations in Royalton 2000**



Source: Center for Rural Studies, 2000 Census

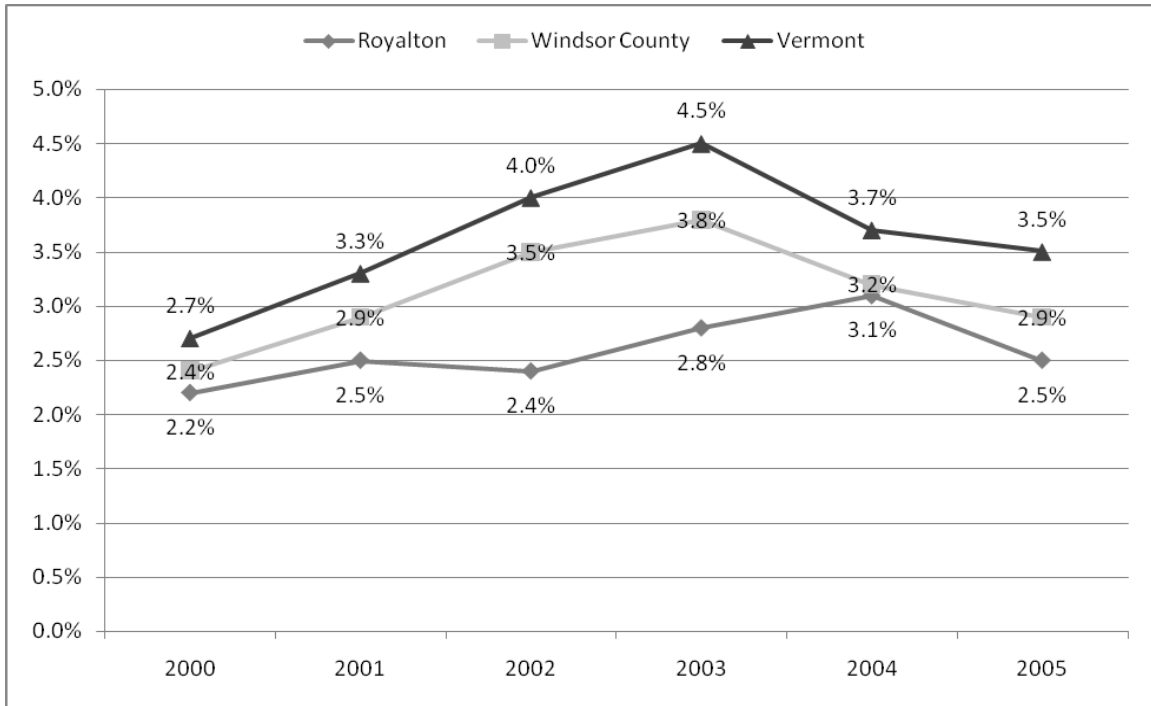
Although occupations in fishing and forestry make up only 1.4% in Royalton, Figure 5 below shows that the number of farms, ownership of farms (tenure), and the number of farms harvesting crops have all increased from 1997 to 2002. Farming in Royalton seems to be following a statewide trend to smaller farms offering a wider variety of products.

**Figure 5: Farms in Royalton, 1997-2002**

|                       | Farms by size |               |                 | Farms by tenure |             |         |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|---------|
|                       | All farms     | 1 to 49 acres | 50 to 999 acres | Full owners     | Part owners | Tenants |
| <b>1997</b>           | 53            | 14            | 39              | 30              | 16          | 7       |
| <b>2002</b>           | 66            | 22            | 44              | 39              | 26          | 0       |
| <b>percent change</b> | 24.5%         | 57.1%         | 12.8%           | 30.0%           | 62.5%       | -100.0% |

Unemployment rates over a five year period are shown below in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: Royalton's Unemployment Rate (2000 - 2005)**

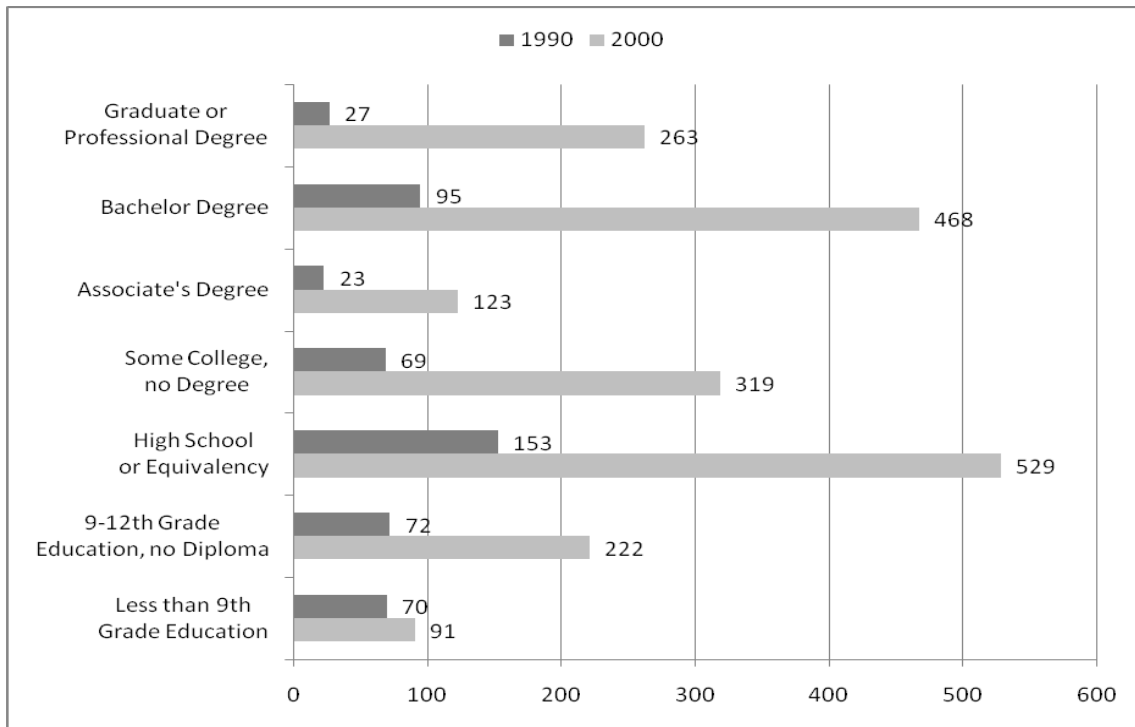


Source: Center for Rural Studies, 2000 Census

Statewide, the year 2007 showed losses in manufacturing and construction employment. While a relatively low unemployment rate is good for the region's residents, it indicates a very tight labor market, where new and growing employers are likely to face difficulty finding sufficient employees.

Unemployment and educational attainment are related. The more educated a workforce is, the greater it's earning potential and resiliency during recessions, layoffs, or job relocations. Figure 7 below shows that Royalton's population is increasingly more educated, which is good economic news.

**Figure 7: Royalton Population over 18 Years with...(2000)**



Source: Center for Rural Studies, 2000 Census

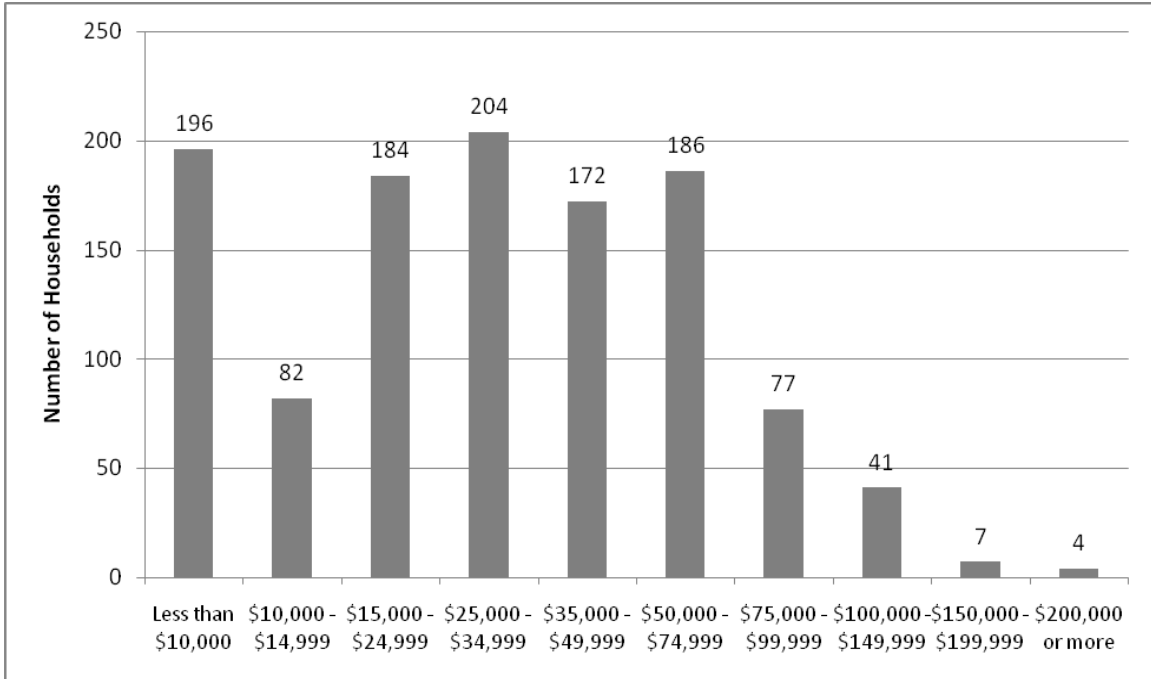
The average annual wage in 2006 for Royalton’s employed labor force was \$37,369. In general, between 2000 and 2006, the annual average wage in Royalton was greater than that for Windsor County and usually exceeded that for Vermont as illustrated in Figure 8. As with median family income, the household type greatly influences whether a Royalton family subsists below, near, or above poverty status.

**Figure 8: Annual Average Wage (2000 - 2006)**

|      | Royalton | Randolph | Windsor County | Vermont  |
|------|----------|----------|----------------|----------|
| 2000 | \$31,346 | \$25,076 | \$27,414       | \$28,925 |
| 2001 | \$31,299 | \$26,776 | \$28,039       | \$30,239 |
| 2002 | \$32,565 | \$27,512 | \$29,167       | \$31,041 |
| 2003 | \$33,299 | \$28,805 | \$30,083       | \$32,090 |
| 2004 | \$33,991 | \$29,759 | \$31,445       | \$33,276 |
| 2005 | \$35,405 | \$30,487 | \$32,240       | \$34,199 |
| 2006 | \$37,369 | \$30,697 | \$33,796       | \$35,535 |

Source: Center for Rural Studies, 2000 Census

**Figure 9: Royalton Household Income 1999**



Source: Center for Rural Studies, 2000 Census

Figure 9 displays a profile of Royalton’s household income in 1999. About 40% or 462 households earned less than \$25,000 annually. The median household income in Royalton during that year was about \$31,000, which is \$10,000 less than both the county and state household median income levels. This corresponds to the unfortunate fact that the number of people for whom poverty status was considered and the number of people who were deemed in poverty has grown in the last two Census cycles.

A total of 562 households earned between \$25,000 and \$75,000, which was about 49% of the households in town. Last, 129 households earn more than \$75,000 annually, or about 11%.

### **Designated Village Centers**

Village Center Designation, as provided for in 24 V.S.A. Chapter 76A, was created by the legislature to recognize and encourage local efforts to revitalize Vermont's traditional village centers. While village center revitalization is an ongoing process to improve a community's vitality and livability, village center designation is only one tool and its focus is on supporting commercial activity in the center of Vermont's villages. Communities who pursue village center designation are encouraged to undertake other activities that support long-term revitalization. Royalton Village and South Royalton Village both have Village Designations. South Royalton is also designated as a National Historic Village in the National Register of Historic Places which is the official federal listing of significant historic, architectural, and archaeological resources. Benefits of village designations to Royalton property owners, business owners, lessees and the village include:

- tax credits for building rehabilitation and code improvements, such as handicapped access;
- priority consideration for all grants administered through the State's Municipal Planning Grant Program and the Consolidated Plan for HUD funding, including the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG);
- priority consideration by the State Building Department when leasing or constructing buildings, in consultation with the community; and
- use of funds for operating costs in addition to capital expenses.

The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission has funding to assist the Town with environmental assessment of properties that may be contaminated with petroleum wastes. A focus of these funds is on redevelopment of village center properties, particularly for workforce housing or other economic development projects.

### **Economic Future**

The cost of providing schooling and other government services to new households is the primary reason for the Town to be concerned about jobs creation and residential development. The property tax is the primary revenue source currently available to Royalton to cover these costs. On average, property taxes for new, year-round residences will not cover costs of providing services to families in those homes. Consequently, Royalton's role as only a bedroom community should be discouraged.

A healthy mixed economy is considered optimum. The purpose of this economic plan is to promote economic diversity by allowing light industries and professions that do not have a negative impact on the area. Examples of negative impacts could include, but are not limited to:

- production or use of significant amounts of environmentally hazardous materials,
- creation of excessive noise,
- significantly increased vehicular traffic,
- businesses that decrease the overall quality of life of the town's residents,
- businesses that utilize more of the towns services than the tax benefits they return to the town.

### **Royalton Revolving Fund**

Presently the Town of Royalton has money available to be loaned at competitive interest rates. The purpose of these funds is to support business growth or start-ups, which will create employment opportunities for local residents.

# Chapter Six

## ENERGY

### Introduction

Vermont planning law requires that municipal plans include an energy program for the community. Such a program is intended to promote efficient utilization of energy. Studies have shown that between 20 and 30 percent of the energy consumed within a community can be conserved. For example, a highly dispersed and unplanned pattern of land use can waste both land and energy resources. By planning the location of jobs, public services and housing in close proximity to growth centers, the consumption of fuel and the needs for additional roads can be reduced. The siting and design of buildings and the selection of energy systems can influence efficient use and conservation of energy. These savings would free-up money to be used elsewhere in the community; additionally this would reduce dependence on natural resources and lessen environmental impact. Conservation requires us to consider changes in our lifestyle and to invest personal and public funds in cost-saving measures.

### Energy Demands

The *Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan* (last updated in 1998) indicated that the major fuels consumed in Vermont at that time were oil, electric, wood, LPG and natural gas. These sources were also included as home heating sources (Figure 10). Per capita energy consumption for residential and transportation purposes is about the same as in the Northeast. About 76% of all energy used is for these purposes. Almost 80% of residential energy is dedicated to space heating and domestic hot water. State energy officials estimate that simple conservation measures incorporated in new housing can result in a 20% to 30% reduction of energy usage. About half of all energy used in Vermont (hence, most likely in Royalton) is for transportation.

### Goal:

1. To ensure Royalton residents have access to energy resources at reasonable costs while supporting resource management in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner.

### Objective:

1. Encourage the conservation and efficient use of energy resources, and the use of renewable, alternative sources of energy.

### Recommendations:

1. Support public education and awareness programs aimed at: 1) reducing energy consumption, 2) using energy more efficiently, and 3) switching to alternative sources of energy.
2. Encourage guidelines specifying conservation of energy and utilization of renewable energy resources.

3. Plan capital improvements to promote alternatives to automobile use such as bike paths and footpaths, commuter parking lots, and new and/or improved sidewalks.
4. All new construction, or renovations of existing structures, shall when feasible, comply with energy conservation recommendations established by the State of Vermont.

**Policies:**

1. Promote land use densities and patterns that will result in conservation and efficient use of energy such as cluster developments and solar orientation.
2. The Town should promote the design and construction of buildings and structures that are energy efficient and reduce the need for costly new sources of energy.
3. The Town should encourage the development of local renewable energy sources at an appropriate scale to reduce dependence on outside foreign energy sources.
4. Energy and efficiency standards should be applied to the operation of municipal facilities and departments, and in any future municipal construction.

**Existing Energy Sources and Consumption**

Royalton’s electric power supply comes from Central Vermont Public Service Company (CVPS) and the source is a combination of hydro, nuclear, and fossil fuel. High electric rates discourage electric heat.

There is one power substation in Town and no generating stations. The town is fed by an additional substation.

LP (liquefied propane) gas, oil, kerosene and wood fuels are available to Royalton residents from various private suppliers. According to the Energy Information Administration, in 2005, 9.3% of Vermont residences heated with natural gas, 39.1 % heated with petroleum, 6.6% heated with kerosene, 18.2% with propane, 4.5% with wood, and 22.4% with electricity. Figure 10 shows US Census figures for home heating in Royalton and Windsor County.

**Alternative Energy Sources**

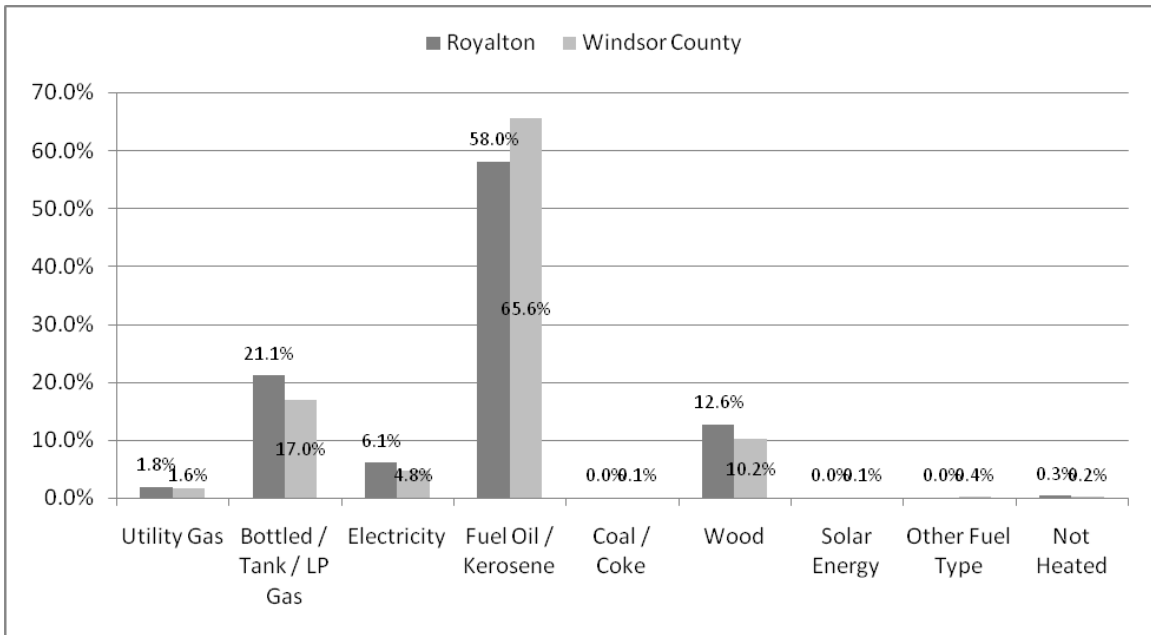
A number of alternative energy sources are available in Royalton: renewable energy sources (such as solar, wind and wood). According to the 1997-98 Vermont Residential Fuel Wood Assessment, 31% of Vermont households use wood as a fuel source for heating. About 16% used wood as their primary source of heat and 15% used wood as a supplemental heat source. The Department of Public Service estimates that the average household uses between three and four cords of wood each year during the heating season. Given the number of homes in Royalton that were heated with wood in 2000 according to the US Census (146), it is estimated that between 438 and 584 cords of wood are consumed annually.

Although initial set up costs for renewable energy generation systems can be high, these systems can save users money over the long term, and they reduce the consumption of

carbon-based fuels, which helps to protect our environment and reduce our reliance on energy producers outside of this region. In Vermont, some of these energy sources are more readily available than others and some are more cost effective for the individual energy producer. Energy recovery technologies (e.g., landfill and agriculture gas collection, municipal composting) do not currently exist in Town. Development and use of such technologies is encouraged.

The degree of air, water, visual or noise pollution shall be considered in reviewing new and revised energy projects.

**Figure 10: Housing Units by Heating Source 2000**



Source: Center for Rural Studies, 2000 Census

### Conservation Programs

Energy conservation programs are offered by CVPS, with several programs aimed at assisting customers in developing energy-saving alternatives. Financial incentives are offered in many cases along with technical assistance, training, and education. Depending upon user classification and need, CVPS programs target:

- Residential High Energy Use.
- Small Commercial Equipment Replacement Program.
- Large Commercial Retrofit Program.
- Industrial Retrofit.
- Industrial New Construction Program.

The Vermont Energy Office and the Vermont State Heat Program supply other available assistance.

About half of all energy used in Vermont is for transportation. Since public transportation in Royalton is nearly non-existent, there are few alternatives, if any, to the automobile. The Town shall encourage car pooling and van pooling to work places outside of town. Park and ride lots would assist this effort.

The Vermont residential energy code, called the Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES), was passed by the Vermont legislature in May 1997. The energy code is a minimum standard of energy efficiency that has applied to virtually all new residential construction in Vermont since July 1, 1998. It includes minimum standards for energy-efficient building components and construction practices, as well as a certification requirement for reporting compliance, but there is no state enforcement of the code. It is a self-certifying compliance program, placing the responsibility on the builder to understand the Energy Code, to build to the minimum technical efficiency standards, and to certify that the building complies with the law. This certification form must be posted in the home and filed at the town clerk's office.

Several energy conservation programs exist in the state, such as Efficiency Vermont, that can help the town as well as private homeowners identify and put into use energy conservation practices for municipal buildings and homes.

The Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network is a source of information about efficiency and energy alternatives, as well as a network of local communities that are establishing local energy committees and working together.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is working with municipalities on its 10% Challenge Program. The program aims to help assess energy performance of municipal buildings, schools, and drinking water and waste water facilities, set energy reduction goals, and promote energy efficiency and renewable energy resources to citizens, businesses and organizations in communities.

# Chapter Seven

## HOUSING

### **Goal:**

1. To promote opportunities for Royalton residents to have access to safe and affordable housing at all income levels.

### **Objectives:**

1. To encourage planning and building of public facilities and expansion of services, compatible with town growth, that supports affordable housing.
2. To ensure that any development of new dwelling units be compatible with existing neighborhoods, agriculture and forestry patterns.
3. To encourage the preservation of historic structures in ways that appropriately serve the need for housing.
4. To encourage development of housing that meets the needs of Royalton's senior population.

### **Recommendations:**

1. A Capital Budget and Program should be developed that would assist in planning for upgrading existing facilities and services and any future expansions.
2. Adopt regulations compatible with the goal set forth in this section.
3. The Town should thoroughly examine whether adequate Senior Citizen housing exists within Royalton.
4. The Town should coordinate with the Vermont Law School to address student housing needs.

### **Policies:**

It is the policy of the Town:

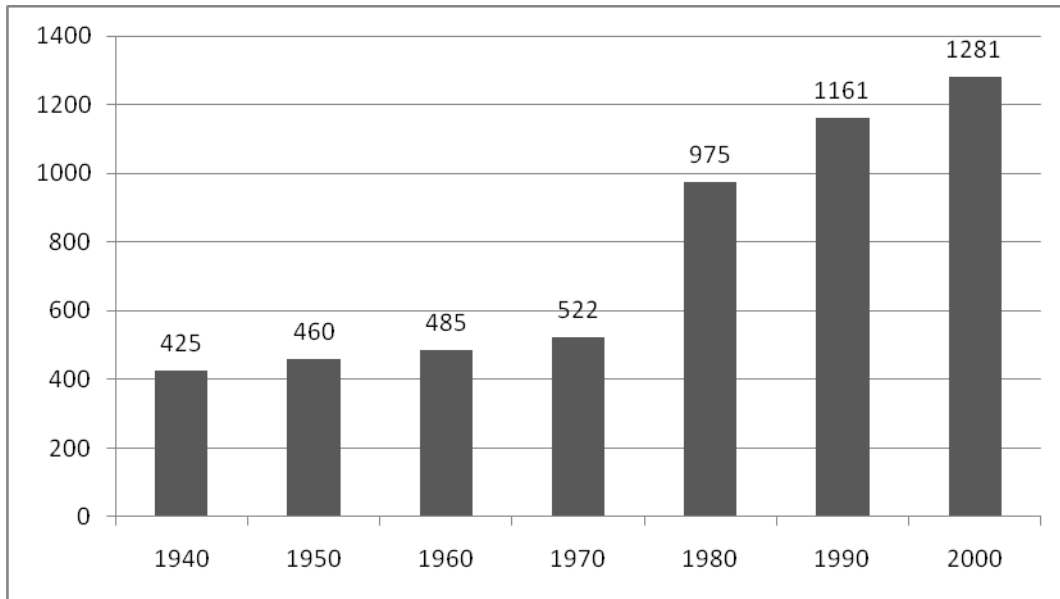
1. To ensure that the timing and rate of new housing construction or rehabilitation does not exceed the community's ability to provide adequate public facilities (e.g., schools and municipal services);
2. To consider affordable housing by structuring appropriately sized lots, accessory apartments, and clustered developments;
3. To encourage providing housing for all segments of the community.

## Background

A major function of local housing planning is to meet two community objectives – first, safe and affordable housing for its present and future population, and second, suitable density and distribution of housing throughout the community. Growth in housing affects the Town’s capacity to provide facilities and services to our townspeople and the character of the area. Housing built without adequate planning for schools, roads, and other public services can overburden the ability of the taxpayers to pay for these services, and also can lower adjacent property values and negatively affect the rural character of the Town.

Royalton’s total number of housing units has been increasing since the 1940s. 1980 saw a drastic increase of 46% in the number of housing units from the 1970 Census, compared to the 28% increase in the Windsor County. The Vermont Law School was started in 1972, however, accounting for much of the additional housing stock. Since 1980, housing units in Royalton have continued to steadily increase by 10-20% every ten years.

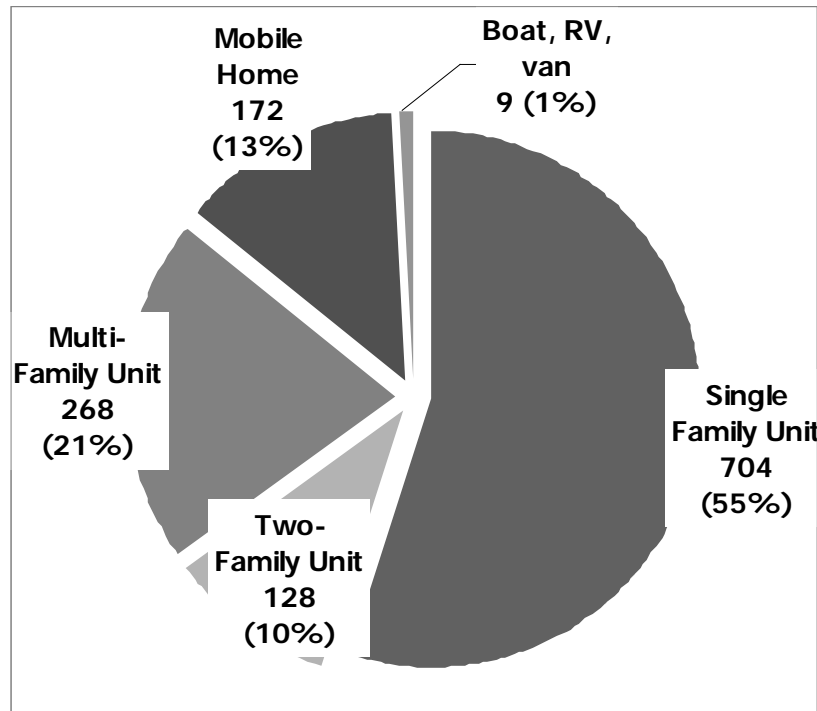
**Figure 11: Total Housing Units in Royalton**



Source: Center for Rural Studies, 2000 Census

The U.S. Census defines a “housing unit” to include conventional houses, apartments, mobile homes, and rooms for occupancy. According to the 2000 Census, Royalton has a total of 1,281 housing units. Like most of the units in towns throughout Vermont, they are predominantly single-family homes, as illustrated in Figure 12. However, compared with other area towns, Royalton has more multi-family and two family units.

**Figure 12: Royalton Housing Units by Type 2000**



Source: Center for Rural Studies, 2000 Census

As indicated by Figure 13, 662 units of the housing stock are owner-occupied while 493 units are rented. The distribution of resident homeowners to non-resident homeowners is about even in Royalton and most of the other surrounding towns. Only in Pomfret and Barnard are there more non-resident homeowners than full time residents.

At the time of the last Census, there was less vacant housing stock – defined as housing used for seasonal, recreational or occasional use - in Royalton (10%) than in Sharon (17%), Bethel (15%) and Tunbridge (24%). Essentially, the rental housing market was tighter at the time in Royalton than in these other towns. According to Vermont Housing and Finance Agency, Vermont had the second tightest rental housing market in the nation in 2007. The rental vacancy rate statewide was 4.9 percent, and the homeownership vacancy rate was 1.0 percent. However, Royalton seems to differ from the state at large, with an excess of rental housing stock in 2008.

**Figure 13: Royalton Housing Ownership 2000**

|        | Royalton | Sharon | Bethel | Tunbridge |
|--------|----------|--------|--------|-----------|
| Owned  | 662      | 414    | 584    | 413       |
| Rented | 493      | 139    | 233    | 100       |
| Vacant | 126      | 110    | 139    | 166       |

Source: Center for Rural Studies, 2000 Census

## Housing Affordability

Affordable housing is defined as housing that costs no more than 30% of the household's income. For homeowners, housing costs include payments for principal and interest on a mortgage, as well as taxes and other related expenses. For renters, housing costs include rent and utilities.

According to the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, the median price in Windsor County during 2007 to rent a 1 Bedroom apartment was \$643. At that rate, renters would need to make an hourly wage of \$11.81 in order to pay only 30% of income toward housing. This translates to an annual salary of about \$23,600. With the average adjusted gross income per person in Royalton during 2005 at just under \$20,000, renting even the smallest market rate apartment is not an option for most single people. Royalton is fortunate, however, to have the Brightwood apartments that offers 15 affordable single bedroom rental units, and Riverbend Mobile Home park with 9 units in service since 1993.

The median family adjusted gross income in Royalton in 2005 was \$46,766, while the same figure for Windsor County was \$52,526. According to Vermont Housing Data's website, in the year 2008 with an annual household income of \$46,708, and cash at closing of \$10,168, a buyer could afford a home costing \$143,000. The average sales price of a single family primary residence in Royalton in 2006, however, was just over \$184,000, creating a gap of about \$40,000.

The cost of housing in Royalton, Windsor County, and the state at large has been trending upward steadily for about the past decade. Single family home average prices from 1997 to 2006 indicate that prices rose by 50%. When compared to Windsor County and Vermont from 1997 to 2006, Royalton has overall maintained an average sales price that is lower than Windsor County and Vermont (\$235,500 and \$238,700 respectively, in 2006).

Adding in the cost of taxes shown below (Figure 14), a complete picture of the problems of housing affordability for homeowners in Royalton is shown below.

**Figure 14: Royalton Tax Rates**

|        | <b>Educational Rate for Homesteads</b> | <b>Common Level of Appraisal (CLA)</b> | <b>Municipal Rate</b> | <b>Total Taxes</b> |
|--------|--|--|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 2008   | \$2.0063                               | 57%                                    | \$0.8546              | \$2.8630           |
| 2007   | \$1.8232                               | 56%                                    | \$0.8409              | \$2.6641           |
| 2006   | \$1.6789                               | 61%                                    | \$0.8180              | \$2.4969           |
| 2005   | \$1.5196                               | 71%                                    | \$0.7550              | \$2.2746           |
| 2004   | \$1.4715                               | 82%                                    | \$0.7444              | \$2.2159           |
| 2003 * | \$1.6412                               | 82%                                    | \$0.6488              | \$2.2900           |
| 2002   | \$1.5979                               | 89%                                    | \$0.5221              | \$2.1200           |

\* indicates last year of old tax structure

Source: Vermont Department of Taxes and the Royalton Listers

By comparing the data from the Chapter on the Economy, Royalton has more households with low to moderate incomes than it has housing with low to moderate prices, regardless of whether a family wants to rent or buy a home. Municipal officials and community volunteers must consider these facts as they work with builders and developers to meet the community's housing needs.

## **Chapter Eight EDUCATION**

### **Goals:**

1. To provide high grade physical facilities at all levels to enhance the quality of education.
2. To encourage and broaden community access to educational and vocational training opportunities.

### **Objective:**

1. To provide appropriate facilities and infrastructure for a variety of academic, athletic, social, cultural and community activities.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Continue to encourage the use of the school for adult education and other community activities.
2. Continue to encourage an educational and professional planning relationship between the Town of Royalton, the Royalton School District and Vermont Law School.
3. Develop plans and financing recommendations for development of efficient school facilities that will meet the town's needs.

### **Royalton School**

The South Royalton School houses both elementary (K-6) and junior/senior high school (7-12) students in the same building complex on South Windsor Street in South Royalton Village.

The Royalton Elementary School had an enrollment of 228 students in 2001 and 181 students in 2007 (Vermont Dept. of Education). The Royalton High School had an enrollment of 256 students in 2001 and 245 students in 2007. Enrollment in 2007 at the school in grades K - 12 has dropped by 150 since 2003, according to the school's website. The total staff as of 2007 consists of 37.8 full time equivalent employees. The State Education Department shows a student/teacher ratio of 11 to 1.

An additional 18 students are enrolled at the Royalton Academy pre-school and some students attend the Randolph Technical Career Center at Randolph High School, using Town tuition funding. The present South Royalton School was built in 1950 and has had four major renovations/additions. The school is noted as being in adequate physical condition. A new gym and other improvements were approved by voters in 2007. The school continues, within its existing budget, to modify facilities to make the building more accessible to those citizens with disabilities, and bus transportation for students is provided by private contractor.

## **Carpenter Recreation Park**

Royalton schools and the community as a whole have benefited by the addition of Carpenter Recreation Park for public use. The Town purchased property has been developed into sports playing fields, which are enjoyed by the Royalton School, Vermont Law School, and community groups.

Community Use of Facilities - Royalton School also serves general community needs. It provides cafeteria and gymnasium space, and is used by the Town recreation program and other non-profit groups.

## **Vermont Law School**

Vermont Law School (VLS) was chartered in 1972 as a private, independent law school. The school is accredited by the American Bar Association and by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools. The only law school in the state of Vermont, it awards the degrees Juris Doctor and Master of Studies in Law. Enrollment at the Law School, as of 2008, is 635 students. Its long-range projection is to keep enrollment steady at this level.

VLS added Oakes Hall, a large classroom facility, and has extensively renovated the Old South Royalton High School, the core of its campus.

VLS, the Selectboard, and the South Royalton High School have an agreement, which offers one qualified South Royalton graduate a full scholarship every three years.

## **Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST) program**

South Royalton High School seniors have the opportunity to apply for admission to the Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST) at the Vermont Technical College. Admission to this one year program allows a student to attend the first year of college, tuition free, while simultaneously completing high school requirements

## **Vocational Opportunities**

The Randolph Technical Career Center provides technical career preparation and offers opportunities for academic and social growth to area youth and adults. Located in Randolph, Vermont, RTCC serves South Royalton High School students and offers programs in business, automotive and building trades, computer technology, media and communications, among others.

The Town encourages development of technical and vocational education programs for adults and students in Royalton. The Town supports community educational workshops, technical and vocational programs, and agricultural education through partnerships between schools, such as the Randolph Technical Career Center, and local businesses. Local businesses might offer internship opportunities such as construction, EMS/paramedic careers, shadowing local artisans, and working on local farms or at farm stands.

## **Chapter Nine**

# **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Goals:**

1. To maintain and improve the quality of Royalton's transportation and road systems in order to promote safety, and to preserve the scenic quality of roads wherever possible.
2. To minimize transportation energy consumption.
3. To ensure that people can travel to work, shopping and other destinations, safely and efficiently.
4. To mitigate the negative impacts of transportation to our businesses, homes, and the greater environment.

### **Objectives:**

1. To reduce congestion in South Royalton Village.
2. To encourage ride sharing for commuters to neighboring employment areas.
3. To provide alternatives to the heavy reliance on individual automobiles.
4. To encourage speed and traffic law enforcement.
5. To create commuter parking lot at I-89, Exit 3.
6. To seek establishment of a regular Amtrak stop in South Royalton.
7. To support transportation of the Elderly & Disabled.
8. To support access management initiatives to preserve the safe flow of traffic.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Develop creative solutions to the parking problems being experienced in South Royalton Village. The "South Royalton Downtown Parking, Traffic & Pedestrian Plan" should be considered in the development of solutions.
2. Inventory and prioritize roadways, bikeways, walkways, and parking areas, as well as town equipment, buildings and facilities, for study and improvement, to be incorporated in the Capital Budget and Program.
3. Review the Town highway policy and access ordinance and revise as necessary.
4. In keeping with the Town's desire to maintain its rural and scenic character (see Chapter Three), the Town should investigate the feasibility of conducting an objective scenic road survey and designate any such roadways as scenic in accordance with Vermont statutes.
5. The Town should actively support and participate in the Regional Transportation

Planning Initiative at TRORC, and stay in close contact with state agencies involved in transportation planning and private sector service providers.

6. Enforce existing parking by-laws, speed limits and other traffic laws.
7. The Town Planning Commission and Vermont Law School should jointly study the impact of students on Town parking facilities and recommend solutions. Any future expansion of the Law School should include additional parking to comply with their existing parking generation rates.
8. The Town should encourage development and maintenance of safe walkways and bicycle paths to support pedestrian access to the downtown area.

**Policies:**

1. In considering major capital transportation projects, policy makers shall weigh reasonable alternatives focusing on environmental, energy, social and investment costs, and the extent to which each meets the goals and policies of this Plan.
2. It is in the public interest to maintain the Town's current highways, bridges, and related facilities as necessary to ensure an acceptable level of service.
3. The Town has no legal responsibility to maintain or improve Class 4 roads. Affected property owners seeking to improve Class 4 roads shall be responsible for meeting all costs incidental to their improvement.
4. An integral scenic element of the rural countryside is the Town's back roads and highway system. If improvements are needed to accommodate increased traffic, it is important to consider the relationship of the road to the surrounding features of the landscape.
5. Strip development is not considered an appropriate land use pattern. Such development occurs in a linear path along a right-of-way and often restricts visual and physical access to interior lands as well as highway access.
6. Developers shall be required to pay for all new roadways to access their developments and other infrastructure upgrades necessary to accommodate any traffic increases.

**Town Highway Classifications**

Map 4 attached to this Plan shows transportation infrastructure in Royalton. The State uses four classification formulas to distribute financial aid to towns for road repair and maintenance. Classifications are jointly determined by the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the Selectboard. Criteria used for the classifications include traffic volumes, road conditions, and function. State aid to the Town decreases on a per mile basis from Class 1 to Class 3. No state aid is available for Class 4 roads. Total aid, therefore, depends on the number of miles of road a town has in each class. In fiscal year 2006 - 2007, Royalton received \$143,793 from the State for all roads.

**Class 1** includes the most heavily traveled town roads usually located in densely settled areas. Class 1 roads are extensions of State Highways and are usually assigned a State

number. There are no Class 1 roads in Royalton.

**Class 2** includes those major town highways selected as the most important highways in town. Class 2 roads serve the purpose of linking towns and high traffic areas such as village settlements and State highways. Class 2 roads are generally paved. Class 2 roads include South Windsor/Chelsea Street, Broad Brook Road, Dairy Hill Road, the North Road, North Windsor Street, and the Stage Road or Royalton Hill Road. Class 2 roads total 15.37 miles.

**Class 3** includes all town roads not Class 1 or 2 that can be driven under normal conditions all seasons of the year by a standard car. In Royalton, Class 3 roads include all other town roads such as Gee Hill Road, Happy Hollow Road, Johnson Hill Road, and Ducker Road. Class 3 roads amount to a total of 54.78 miles.

**Class 4** highways represent the lowest order of importance to the Town. Public use is limited and as such the Town receives no financial aid from the State.

Outline below is a breakdown of both State and Town Highway mileage:

| <b>Highway</b>              | <b>Mileage</b> |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Class 1                     | 0.0            |
| Class 2                     | 15.4           |
| Class 3                     | 55.7           |
| Class 4                     | 6.4            |
| <b>Total Town Highways</b>  | <b>77.5</b>    |
| Route 14                    | 9.1            |
| Route 110                   | 2.3            |
| Route 107                   | 2.5            |
| <b>Total State Highways</b> | <b>13.9</b>    |
| I-89                        | 9.0            |
| <b>Total All Highways</b>   | <b>100.4</b>   |

Source: Vermont General Highway Map, Town of Royalton, VT, 2007

## **Transportation Access**

The road system consists of three state highways: Route 14, Route 110, and Route 107. The Town is bisected by both the railroad tracks and Interstate 89. Both these roads and the rail line have had and will have a significant long-term impact on the Town's development patterns.

Interstate 89 is the major highway to and from the Town. Royalton has direct access to Interstate 89 (Exit 3) at its intersection with Route 107 on the west end of town. Indirect access is provided through Sharon to the east (Exit 2) from Route 14. The completion of the Interstate in the 1970's brought the White River Junction/ Lebanon/ Hanover area and the Montpelier/Barre employment area closer to Royalton in driving time. A high-speed road makes Royalton a target for bedroom community development, with its attendant loss of community self-sufficiency.

Future development along Route 14 should be carried out in a way that does not result in increased truck traffic through Royalton village. Route 14 has two railroad overpasses that

constrain truck traffic.

Driveways to access new developments shall incorporate loop roads whenever the drive will serve three or more housing or commercial units. Cul-de-sacs and hammerheads may not be used unless no other alternative exists. Dead end roads longer than 2,000 feet should be strongly discouraged.

## **Route 107 Corridor**

The Route 107 corridor is significant for a number of reasons. It is a very heavily traveled arterial highway, and forms part of a major transportation corridor between I-89 and Rutland as well as other points west. Multi-modal planning, access management, speed reduction, and infrastructure improvements will have a role in preventing conflicts between land development and through-traffic that have impacted other communities.

**Existing Conditions** - Route 107 was built in the 1960s as a rural modern highway. The wide shoulders and lack of sharp curves allow cars and trucks to travel comfortably at high speeds. These high speeds are acceptable for roads with minimal development, but create unsafe and uncomfortable environments as more development occurs. The speed difference between vehicles already on the road, and new vehicles entering the roadway may create traffic safety problems. Average daily traffic volume for this segment of Route 107 was 7,400 in 1998, according to the Vermont Agency of Transportation. In 2006, the average daily traffic volume was 7,000.

**Access Management** - Access management is essential for the Route 107 commercial area. This is an opportunity for planners to balance land use and traffic growth to maximize land development potential while preserving traffic safety and mobility. Before development occurs, a number of tools should be used which can help minimize this impact:

1. Limit the total size of the Commercial/Industrial Area by identifying portions of the Route 107 corridor that are priorities for agriculture or residential use. The actual commercial frontage along the highway can be limited. Intermodal/industrial uses can occur along the railroad corridor, limiting the number of access points onto Route 107.
2. At the time of subdivision, a single access point for the entire parcel shall be identified, at the safest location, promoting orderly traffic flow.
3. Identify locations for possible new roads, allowing for more integrated, orderly development of lands, and minimize curb cuts on Route 107.
4. Encourage driveways to be located opposite existing driveways, creating four-way intersections rather than offset intersections.
5. For adjacent developments, consider connections between sites, shared parking and shared access, wherever physically feasible.

**Multi-modal Use on Corridor** - Facilities should be developed which encourage the use of

multiple modes of transportation at appropriate locations, including public transit, ridesharing, bicycling, walking, and rail. Use of these modes may offset some growth in traffic demand, save energy, and could lessen the need for future road improvements.

**Infrastructure Improvements** - Despite efforts to manage traffic flow on this corridor through access management and speed limit reduction, there will always be a need to ensure the safety of the corridor's key intersections such as with Route 14, I-89, and Waterman Road. These improvements could take a number of forms, such as turning lanes.

### **Waterman Road**

This area as defined in the 2000 study covers approximately 135 acres of property with primary access to and egress from the intersection of Waterman Road and Route 107. Most existing development in this area is not visible from the rest of town, Interstate 89 and Route 107. A few single family residences and farmsteads are located in the area. Much of the land comprising the area is formerly farmland, or wooded, and is gently sloping. Much of the land has been converted to industrial uses since the opening of Interstate 89. The first 1,000 feet of Waterman Road and its intersection with Route 107 are poorly suited to the heavy truck traffic and will not support further industrial development.

With a new commuter lot to be developed off Waterman Road, along with growing industrial development, there will be increased traffic that will add significant impact to the current capacity, safety and efficiency of Route 107. The current Annual Average Daily Traffic for Route 107 is around 7,000 vehicles and with the additional traffic to and from Waterman Road, that intersection will become busier. In 2003, transportation professionals determined that a designated left turn lane off Route 107 onto Waterman Road will be warranted with additional traffic input. Future improvements to Waterman Road will be necessary.

### **Places of Work**

The 2000 Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP) contains information on origin and destination patterns of residents and workers. This information is also available for other Vermont communities and States. Through analysis of this data, some interesting characteristics of Royalton residents and workers are revealed.

In 2000, 418 workers 16 years or older commuted to jobs within Royalton, or 35% of Royalton's workers. As might be expected, a large number of commuters were from area towns in close proximity to Royalton, as outlined below. Workers from these ten communities represented 43% of the workers employed in Royalton, but not living in town.

**Figure 15: Commuters to Royalton**

|           |    |             |    |
|-----------|----|-------------|----|
| Bethel    | 99 | Chelsea     | 31 |
| Randolph  | 98 | Brookfield  | 28 |
| Tunbridge | 85 | Hartland    | 23 |
| Hartford  | 61 | Lebanon, NH | 22 |
| Braintree | 36 | Barnard     | 19 |

Source: 2000 Census - CTPP

A total of 677 workers did not work in Royalton (or 52%), but worked close by in neighboring communities. Figure 16 below provides a breakdown of commuters from Royalton.

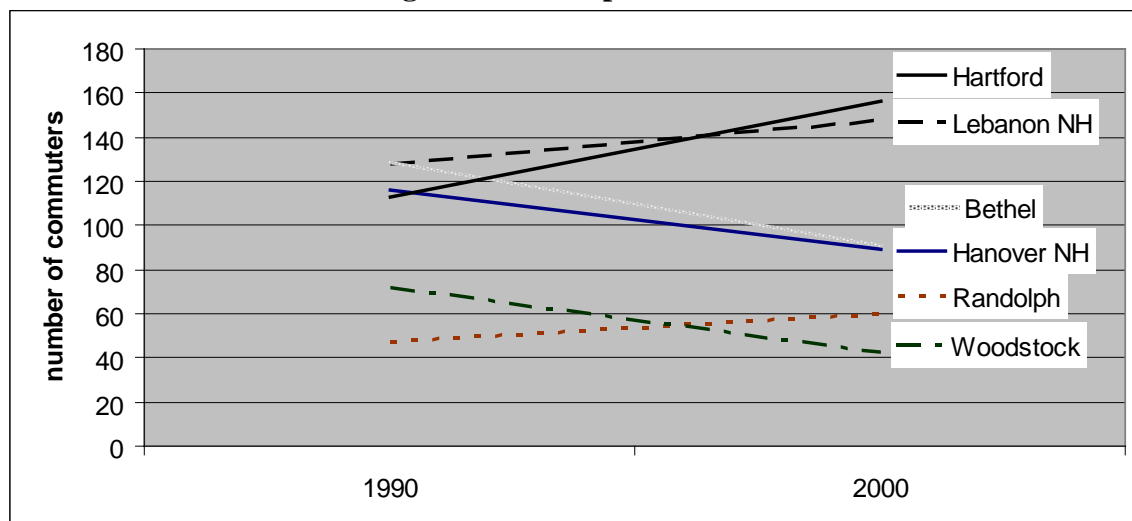
**Figure 16: Commuters from Royalton**

|             |     |           |    |
|-------------|-----|-----------|----|
| Hartford    | 156 | Woodstock | 43 |
| Lebanon, NH | 148 | Sharon    | 31 |
| Bethel      | 91  | Norwich   | 24 |
| Hanover, NH | 89  | Ludlow    | 18 |
| Randolph    | 60  | Barnard   | 17 |

Source: 2000 Census - CTPP

As illustrated in the commuter data above, 62% of Royalton residents are working in the Upper Valley (Hartford, Lebanon, Hanover and Norwich). Twenty three Royalton residents work in the Montpelier-Barre area. Transportation planners expect this number to rise over time as the economy shifts. The figure below illustrates how commutes to Upper Valley towns changed from 1990 to 2000.

**Figure 17: Workplace Trends**



Source: 1990 and 2000 Census – CTPP

In 1990, 59% of Royalton residents had a 20 minute or longer commute, while in 2000,

61.5% had this same commute. Royalton had an average commute time of almost 26 minutes in 2000, similar to most neighboring towns. The Windsor County, state, and national average commute time was at least 20 minutes in 2000. The single-occupant vehicle still remains to be the primary means of transportation.

### **Park & Ride**

Private automobiles are still heavily depended upon by Royalton residents, as in most other Vermont communities. The development of carpools or vanpools, either by private arrangements or through Rideshare programs, would have the benefit of decreasing dependence on private autos. Currently, there is one commuter lot on Route 14 at the junction of Route 110 in South Royalton. There is also a proposed commuter lot to be located off I-89, Exit 3 off Waterman Road. It is currently in the Design & Engineering phase on the list of State transportation projects, scheduled for construction when funds become available. With increasing fuel costs, municipal officials and residents are concerned that people will not be able to afford their commutes to work. Demand for Park and Ride and Rideshare programs will likely increase for most Vermonters. The Town supports increased availability of Rideshare programs so that demand for parking does not outstrip availability.

### **Public Transportation**

Royalton is traversed by the New England Central Railroad (NECR) which goes from New London, Connecticut, through White River Junction to East Alburg, VT. The NECR line serves both freight and Amtrak passenger traffic. The nearest passenger station is in Randolph. Royalton continues to support the establishment of a regular Amtrak passenger stop in South Royalton.

The closest airport offering regularly scheduled service is in Lebanon, NH which is about a half hour drive. Burlington International Airport is about one hour north. Manchester, NH airport is approximately two hours away, and Logan International Airport in Boston is located about 3 hours away.

Royalton is served by Stagecoach, Inc., a private non-profit organization that provides public transportation services to the elderly, persons with disabilities, and the general public in Orange and northern Windsor Counties of Vermont. The 89er commuter route runs from Randolph Village to Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center and Dartmouth College and West Lebanon, stopping in Bethel. The Town of Royalton supports establishment of a stop in Royalton. Stagecoach also offers Elderly and Disabled service for residents who call and schedule rides. This E&D service is a growing need. The community should continue to support public transportation in the future, consistent with resident's desire to 'age in place.'

### **Road and Culvert Management**

The town of Royalton inventoried and assessed every road mile and culvert in 2006. The culvert conditions in Royalton are consistent with, and in some cases better than, other towns in the region. The Road Surface Management System and culvert inventory gives the town a

better local match rate on state grants and helps town officials manage their system. These are important assets of the local transportation system and should be maintained consistently with municipal policies.

### **Future Highway Construction Activities**

The Vermont Agency of Transportation is scheduled to replace the two bridges near the Spaulding farm on Route 14. Timetables are established by the Vermont Agency of Transportation. The Chelsea Street Bridge was completed in 2002, and the new Crawford Bridge in 2006.

# Chapter Ten

## LAND USE

### **Goal:**

1. To maintain the rural/village character of Royalton, preserving scenic beauty, natural resources and the cultural assets of the Town while allowing for acceptable growth in appropriate locations.

### **Objectives:**

1. To manage growth and development in a manner that protects Royalton's natural resources and the environment, preserves the area's historic and cultural assets, and does not strain municipal facilities and services.
2. To allow for a diversity of low impact uses within the Town.
3. To encourage the conservation of undeveloped land and the sustainable use of farms and forests.
4. To maintain the character and vitality of the Town villages as commercial and service hubs.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Establish procedures for preserving the integrity of historic sites within the Town.
2. Develop regulations to control growth, development and traffic so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village separated by rural countryside.
3. Consider future adoption of limited land use regulations as necessary to preserve community values, and to ensure that growth will not outstrip the Town's ability to provide services or infrastructure at an affordable tax rate.
4. Promote the preservation of desirable existing land uses by interacting with land trusts and other conservation groups, the use of conservation easements, transfer of development rights or other innovative techniques to compensate the landowner while preserving desirable uses.

### **Policies:**

1. Any actions taken to implement Recommendations in this Plan shall be done in a manner consistent with existing uses and planned growth patterns of the Town.
2. Customary uses of land--residences, farms, public uses, and home occupations-- shall be permitted throughout the Town. Toxic, noxious or overly noisy uses are discouraged in all areas. However, agricultural uses employing normal and customary agricultural practices shall be deemed compatible with other uses wherever located.
3. Public facilities shall be located in South Royalton Village and in Royalton Village, if suitable sites can be found.

4. Preservation of the agricultural aspects of the Town shall be encouraged.
5. Strip development is not supported. Commercial development shall be located within one half mile of the designated South Royalton Village or Royalton Village, and the Exit 3 Area, re-using existing sites where possible, or in other locations specifically recommended in this plan and its amendments.
6. Except in the Commercial/Industrial Areas, Village Areas, and Exit 3 Development Areas, any new development shall avoid specific portions of land that contain special resources such as prime agricultural soils, marshes, deer wintering areas, or other unique wildlife areas.
7. Development shall be discouraged where emergency services access and public access is difficult, or where water sufficient for fire suppression is unavailable.
8. Development shall mitigate all traffic conditions that could overburden existing highway infrastructure or create traffic safety problems.
9. New development in the Exit 3 Area is encouraged consistent with the policies stated in the Exit 3 Interchange Planning And Development Study, incorporated into this Plan as Appendix II.

### **Existing and Historical Land Use**

As shown on the attached Maps 1 and 2, Royalton is roughly divided in half by the White River and further partitioned by the First and Second Branches of the White River. Railroad tracks parallel the White River, as does Interstate 89, and Route 14; and Vermont Route 110 runs parallel to the First Branch as a thoroughfare to Tunbridge and Chelsea. While there is beautiful alluvial land, the Town also has much land that is hilly, ledge, or practically inaccessible. Public activity, commercial development and residential settlement are still concentrated in the White River Valley.

Historically, Royalton's land use pattern has been one of compact villages and diffuse residential development, linked by agricultural land use. South Royalton and Royalton Villages both have Village Designations, populated densely with Vermont Law School students and town residents. Many of Royalton's other residents, however, are spread throughout the town, living along the network of mostly unpaved "back roads." It is the small, compact villages and the open, working landscapes that define Royalton. Maintaining the balance between Royalton's villages and the residential and agricultural development of the areas surrounding them is essential to maintaining the Town's rural character. Home businesses, light industry and developments that can contribute to the rural character within an area like Royalton are not only welcome, but encouraged.

### **Land Use Regulations and Act 250**

Historically, the citizens of Royalton have generally taken a "no regulation" stance when zoning has been considered. However, during Planning Commission workshops held in 2006 and 2007, some residents acknowledged a growing need to discuss the idea of land use

regulations.

Towns without land use regulations are always at risk when a large-scale development is proposed. Because of this, State regulators have designated all towns without land use regulation as “1 Acre Towns” for the purposes of review under Act 250. This designation means the following:

- Any commercial or industrial developments of over one acre of property shall trigger a review under Act 250.
- The subdivision of land into six or more lots within a continuous period of five years shall trigger review under Act 250.

Under Criterion 10 of Act 250, any proposed project must conform to all duly adopted local and regional plans. It seeks to ensure that new development respects the wishes of Vermont citizens about the future of their town and region.

The Environmental Court has often found it difficult to interpret town plans in a regulatory proceeding because of their inherently vague and non-specific language. Town plans are generally considered visionary documents, and though not intended to be the word of law, will be used by the Environmental Board for direction if zoning laws do not exist. Considering that Royalton does not have land use regulations at this time, the town must specify the standards it expects a developer to meet if it wants the Town Plan to have controlling weight under Act 250. We have chosen strong language below to ensure that the Town Plan gives a clear message to an environmental board if the need arises.

All projects requiring an Act 250 permit shall conform to the following Guidelines. Conformance with these Guidelines is required for being in conformance with the Royalton Town Plan under Criterion 10 of Act 250. These Guidelines are in the nature of recommendations for all other projects.

#### Lot Layout – All Uses

- Avoid monotonous lot layout of equally sized and shaped lots, especially along a road frontage.
- The amount of frontage and building position will be varied from lot to lot to avoid a suburban pattern of repeated houses or other buildings situated at or near the middle of adjacent lots one after another.
- Creating more than one adjacent lot with a depth greater than four times its frontage (“spaghetti lots”) is prohibited.
- Buildings shall be located at the edges of woodlands and fields, relatively close to roads, along hedgerows, etc., in an effort to preserve tillable units, whether or not in the same ownership.
- Lay out lots to take advantage of and preserve desirable features, such as stone walls, hedgerows, fields, natural clearings, and land contours.
- Locating buildings at the top of ridgelines or at the brows of hills where land is open and sites would be highly visible from nearby public roads is prohibited.
- Excavation for roads or buildings where excessive erosion will be likely is

prohibited.

- Locate buildings and other construction such that they will not detract from natural or scenic features, such as bodies of water or historic resources.
- In the case of multiple unit projects, buildings shall be clustered.
- On developments involving adjacent buildings or lots, driveways must be shared.
- Locate light industrial and commercial uses where they will not be prominently visible, or screen such uses to minimize detrimental impacts on neighboring uses.
- Locate any noisy, toxic, or noxious uses where they will not be detected from public roads or neighboring uses (especially housing), and/or take all reasonable means to screen or lessen any detrimental impacts of such uses. This provision does not apply to agricultural uses.

#### Uses in South Royalton Village or Royalton Village

- Construct buildings that are of the size and scale of other buildings in the Village Area.
- Use traditional building massing, forms and materials within these two settled areas.
- Where alteration of “contributing structures” (structures that are deemed architecturally or culturally significant to a historic district) within the Village Area is contemplated, such alterations shall maintain the original character.
- Within settled areas, home businesses are deemed to be a use compatible with existing uses.
- Any development within the Village Areas may have an impact on the existing water supply due to the limited space. Developers must prove that their development will not have any negative effects on public or private water supplies within this area.

#### Commercial Development

- Development shall be located in clusters set back from State or Town roads.
- Existing buildings or parts thereof shall be reused for commercial development.
- Do not locate large parking or delivery areas in front of commercial buildings. Large parking areas shall be located at the sides or rear of such buildings. Where feasible, share parking areas between adjacent uses.
- Commercial signs shall be illuminated from above.
- Maintain trees and existing vegetation adjacent to State or Town roads. A generously landscaped buffer (using native plants and trees) shall be part of any new construction adjacent to State or Town roads.
- Share all curb cuts to State or Town roads. Minimize paved or impermeable areas.

#### **Future Land Use**

One of the primary considerations of this Plan continues to be how land is used and will be used in the future. Many decisions about land use, once made, cannot practically be reversed. Farm fields turned into housing units, development of scenic areas, and construction practices which result in long term erosion or ecological damage are examples

which should be evaluated and approved by the Town prior to any change in land use or construction. Any development plan must consider the impact of proposed change in land use on the preservation of land for this generation and for future generations. Development proposals must promote the public benefit. At the same time, the Town must use discretion and not prejudice the individual.

The Town presently and in the future has need for land for public buildings, parking areas, recreational areas, schools, access routes, town forest land protecting water resources, and for various other facilities. The Town must regularly assess public land needs and, when necessary, recommend purchases or acquisition to the voters. Town investments in infrastructure shall not be made to the detriment of viable agricultural, conservation or recreation lands.

Included in this Plan are maps of present land use and future land use areas.

Future Land Use is categorized in this Plan into one of the following areas: resource conservation area, flood hazard/shoreland area, agricultural/residential area, village area commercial/industrial area, or Exit 3 Development area. These areas are described below and depicted in Map #2:

**Resource Conservation Area** - The purpose of the resource conservation area is to protect the natural resource value of lands that are essentially undeveloped; lack direct access to arterial and collector roads; are important for wildlife and wildlife habitat; have high potential for commercial forestry use; are unsuitable for land development; or include irreplaceable, limited, or significant natural, recreational, or scenic resources. Its further purpose is to protect higher elevations that have shallow soils and fragile vegetation and that provide significant recharge to the ground and surface water supplies of the Town and the region. No public sewer and water facilities are planned for these areas. Due to the limited facilities and services proposed for the area and the critical resources located within it, only certain uses may be allowed. These are: low-density residential development, limited outdoor recreation uses, conservation uses, and forestry practices that are compatible with the area purposes and do not require additional facilities and services.

**Flood Hazard/Shoreland Area** - The purpose of the flood hazard/shoreland area is to: prevent increases in flooding caused by undue development of lands in flood hazard areas; minimize losses due to floods in Royalton or in downstream towns, preserve and enhance high quality waters; provide for the beneficial use of public waters by the general public; protect shorelands of waters; maintain a low density of development; and to promote high standards of quality for permitted development. Permitted development within this area shall protect public access to the rivers or ponds, be compatible with the visual quality of the area, protect existing vegetation, and not cause any water pollution problems. Building on land that has been elevated above the flood hazard level in the flood hazard area shall be discouraged. Outdoor recreation uses are encouraged. Expansion of new commercial development shall not be permitted.

**Agricultural/Residential Area** - The purpose of the agricultural/residential area is to protect lands with an economic capability for agriculture that are now predominately

undeveloped except for uses associated with agriculture or forestry, and to ensure that residential and other compatible uses are placed at densities appropriate with the physical capability of the land. Planned residential developments and land uses that do not remove the potential of the land for agricultural production such as open space, conservation, certain forms of outdoor recreation, and other uses which preserve the rural character of these areas are encouraged. The extension of public water supply and sewage disposal systems are not planned for this area. Therefore, only low-density residential and recreational development that utilizes existing facilities, which can adequately dispose of its sewage, and that is compatible with the area purposes should be permitted. Any proposed Development should not harm any irreplaceable, unique, or scarce resources or any natural areas.

**Village Area** - The purpose of the village area is to support the role of the village as the focus of social and economic activities in the community and to provide for residential, commercial, and other uses that are compatible with a community center. Such development should preserve the traditional social and physical character of the village, including its historic and scenic resources, and should not tax the capability of the lands, waters, services, and facilities. Sufficient facilities and services are planned for this area to accommodate moderate-to-high density development.

**Commercial/Industrial Area** - The purpose of the commercial/industrial area is to provide commercial, industrial, and institutional uses to serve the Town and the region. The character of the area will be protected and enhanced by uses providing adequate parking facilities and suitable landscaping and screening. All uses will be located and designed so as to enhance the existing structures in the area and provide for a smooth traffic flow. The area must be serviced by good transportation facilities and public utilities. Junk and salvage yards and similar uses are discouraged.

**Exit 3 Development Area**– The purpose of the Exit 3 Development Area is to provide for mixed use development in ways that:

- Do not detract from the viability of the villages of Royalton, South Royalton, and Bethel;
- Are carefully laid out for safe access onto Route 14 and Route 107;
- Preserve the carrying capacity of Route 107 as a minor arterial road;
- Protect sensitive resources and scenic areas; and
- Employ good site planning principles.

In 1999 and 2000 the Planning Commission conducted a study of development alternatives for the Exit 3 Area. The results of this study are contained in a report entitled *Exit 3 Planning and Development Study*. The report is included as a part of this Plan, in Appendix II.

The report is a Master Plan for the Exit 3 area that offers detailed guidance on future development within this area. Specific goals, policies, and recommendations for each of nine sub-areas are included in the study. The nine future land use sub-areas within this Area are:

- Route 107 Low Density Service/Office;
- Waterman Road Industrial;
- Intermodal Industrial;
- Industrial;
- Farmland Conservation/Limited Development;
- Residential;
- Low Density Residential;
- Foxville Hamlet; and,
- Exit 3 Access

Planners and developers shall follow the Study in planning projects within the Exit 3 Development Area.

It is in the Town's interest to accommodate development in this Area provided, however, that it does not adversely affect traffic flow nor endanger the public's investment in existing highways. Future developers shall avoid adding to traffic problems through the use of access management techniques, speed reduction, or infrastructure improvements.

# **Chapter Eleven**

## **TOWN PLAN IN RELATIONSHIP TO NEIGHBORING TOWNS AND THE REGION**

### **Goal:**

1. To plan for the harmonious development of the region and to work with neighboring towns to address mutual concerns.

### **Objectives:**

1. Work to maintain and promote the natural beauty and environmental quality of the region while allowing for reasonable economic growth.
2. Develop regional solutions to problems that transcend town borders.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Continue full participation in the Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission.
2. Continue reviewing state agency planning documents to monitor and influence possible impacts on Royalton.
3. Exchange planning information and development trend data with neighboring communities.
4. Participate in the planning process of neighboring towns where appropriate.
5. Invite participation of neighboring towns in Royalton's planning process.

### **Neighboring Town Planning Activities**

Each Town Plan that is developed and approved at the local, regional and state level is required to be compatible with other local plans, especially those of surrounding towns with common borders.

The town of Royalton is bordered by the towns of Tunbridge, Strafford, Sharon, Pomfret, Barnard, Bethel, and Randolph. All of these towns have Planning Commissions, and all have Town Plans that have also been approved by the Regional Planning Commission. The neighboring town Plans have been reviewed in the context of the proposed Royalton Town Plan. No conflicts exist in either general philosophy or specific development or future land use proposals along town borders.

### **Regional Planning Activities**

Royalton is within the Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission. It is one of thirty municipalities that comprise the Region. The Region covers northern Windsor County, most of Orange County, the Town of Pittsfield in Rutland County, and the Towns of Hancock and Granville in Addison County. The Commission was chartered in 1970 by the

acts of its constituent towns. All towns are members of the Regional Commission, and town representatives govern its affairs. One of the Regional Commission's primary purposes is to provide technical services to town officials and to undertake a regional planning program. As is the case in many areas of the State, the extent of local planning throughout the Region is varied. Some municipalities are more active than others. Thus, the level of services to each of the towns changes with time.

The Regional Commission has an adopted Regional Plan in place. This Plan was developed to reflect the general planning goals and policies expressed in the local plans. The Regional Plan is an official policy statement on growth and development of the Region. The Plan contains several hundred policies to guide future public and private development in the Region. Policies for land use settlement are identified. These areas are: Regional Centers, Town Centers, Village Settlements, Hamlet Areas, Rural Areas, Conservation and Resource Areas, and Interchange Areas. Although delineation of each land use is not precisely mapped or charted in the Regional Plan, policies for management of new development within these areas are substantially similar to those set forth in detail in the Royalton Town Plan. The two Plans have similar policy statements regarding the need for development that does not overburden services. The Regional Plan shall be consulted as part of the planning process for the Town.

# Appendix I

## HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES

District and number are as listed in “Nash’s History of Royalton,” available at the Town Offices and at the Royalton Memorial Library.

### **Royalton Village**                      Site B Last Known Owner, where available

Royalton Public Library B Town of Royalton  
Jacob Smith House B James & Nancy Snelling  
Stillman Smith House B Michael P. Bald  
Royalton Academy B Town of Royalton  
Congregational Church B First Congregational Church  
Jo Adam Denison House B John P. Dumville  
Wild House B Brian Miller & Alta B. Williams  
Town House B Town of Royalton  
John Sprague House B Sandra Walton  
Episcopal Church B Royal Historical Society  
Bloss House B Diane Hoffman  
Joseph Fessendon House B Richard McGovern Trust  
Center School House B Town of Royalton  
Zebulon Lyon House B Steve & Wendy Judge

### **South Royalton Village**

G. Root House B VLS  
Former Catholic Church B VLS  
Whitcomb House B VLS  
Dr. O. J. Ellis House B VLS  
Earl Shepard House B Carol Greene  
St. Matthew’s Church B Allen S., Carol S. & Steven S. Teel  
Parsonage B United Church Federated  
Cowdery Place B Marian & Clarince Button  
Skinner-Eddy House B CPM Properties, LLC  
Fred Sargent Place B Joanne M. Tortolano  
Southworth-Button House B Christopher & Taylor Young  
Whitcomb-Leonard House B K & D Realty Trust  
Schoolhouse B VLS  
Abbott House B VLS  
Cilley-Flint House B Theron & Madeleine Manning  
Valley Craftsman B VLS  
Dickerman Block B Rhino PM II, LLC  
Tarbell-Whitham Office B Jon & Jeanette Tuller  
Lamb-Sears House B VLS  
Thompson-Curtis House B VLS

Deacon Young-Rogers Place B VLS  
 Hood-Pixley House B Acre Management  
 Bailey-Davis House B VLS  
 Goff-Knight House B Chris E. Moorhead  
 Old Congregational Parsonage B Theron & Madeleine Manning  
 Viall-Vesper House B Theron & Madeleine Manning  
 Brock House B Roland Brock  
 Preston-Lovering House B Paul J. Perkins & Denise C. Boudreau  
 Ellis House B Richard W. & Pauline G. Ellis  
 Sara Goodrich Place B Mark Albee & Ann McLaughlin  
 Creamery B Welch's True Value Hardware  
 Manchester-Folsom House B Lillian Crawford  
 The Block, Laundromat B Royalton IOOF #74  
 The Block, (Skinner Block) Community Shop B Thomas M. Powers  
 The Block, (Paine Block) B Welch's True Value Hardware  
 The Block, E. L. Eddy Store B Thomas M. & Candace Powers  
 The Block, Dewey Store B Thomas M. & Candace Powers  
 The Block, (Sherman Block) B Dane Fulcher  
 The Block, (Edison-Bixby Block) B Brenda Cohen  
 The Block, (Adams Block) B Rising Sun Lodge, F & Am  
 South Royalton Railroad Station B Randolph National Bank  
 South Royalton Freight House B New England Central Railroad  
 Baggage House B Randolph National Bank  
 South Royalton House B Railroad & Park Street Partners, LLC.  
 Livery Stable B Railroad & Park Street Partners, LLC.  
 Shepard-Mongeon House B Jack Durcharme  
 Hoyt Knight Blacksmith Shop B Jack Durcharme  
 Grange Hall B Lillian Crawford  
 Garage B Jack Durcharme  
 Royalton Memorial Library B Town of Royalton  
 Old Firehouse B Beatrice & Don Lovejoy  
 Hackett-Lovejoy House B Beatrice & Don Lovejoy  
 Knudson House B Pine Tree Properties, LLC.  
 Sargent-Adams House B Grace & Martin Adams  
 Kibby Doyle House B Jeffrey A. & Monikah Hedberg  
 Stanley- Skinner House B Chadam Properties, LLC.  
 Martin Skinner House B Beth Larkin  
 Munsell Bungalow B Frank B. Lamson  
 Cowdery-Goodrich House B Pine Tree Properties  
 Ilsley Place B Paul & Rhonda Brock  
 Brightwood B VT State Housing Authority  
 Pike Place B Nieces Pieces Properties, LLC.

Marvin Hazen House B Marc D. Nemeth & Erlina G. Farrington  
Will-Stoughton House B Jerry Barcelow  
Lathrop-McBride House B Joshua & Thomas Powers  
Wilmot-Fish House B Joshua & Thomas Powers  
United Church Federated B United Church Federated of South Royalton  
The Red House B Bliss House B Lillian Crawford  
Smith-Ashley House B EPE Corp  
Whitcomb Block B Gregory E. Gundlach & Leslie Carleton  
The Bandstand B Town of Royalton  
Benson-Gray House B Hilda & Robert Gray  
Clifford Place House B Niles Woolf  
Soper-Eckert House B Judy Hayward

**Fox Village**

Fox Stand Inn B Gary R. & Jean A. Curley  
Fox Brick Store B The Compass of Life  
Fox Brick House B Robert C. Manby, Jr. & Kathleen A. Hassey

**Outside Village**

Joseph Smith Memorial B The Church of Jesus Christ of LDS  
Elias Stevens House B Esther M. Swift & Alexander Munroe  
Doyle House B XIA Luxi  
Waldo-Doyle House B Debra Welch-Ballou  
Rix House B Sadie Tetrault  
Benson House B Timothy O. & Janet W. Angell  
Coveney Place B Ifegnyi Menkit  
Wheeler Farm B N. E. District Council Assemblies of God  
Nash Farm B Broadbrook Mountain Farm, Inc.  
Bingham Farm B Christopher & Julianne Mabey  
William Martin House B Lillian Crawford  
Russ Place B Ingrid McDougall  
Mill Complex B Carol Whitney & David, Vincent & Maggie Roller

## **Appendix II**

# **EXIT 3 INTERCHANGE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Exit 3 Development District**

The purpose of the Exit 3 Development district is to provide for mixed use development in ways that:

- Do not detract from the viability of the villages of Royalton, South Royalton and Bethel;
- Are carefully laid out for safe access onto Route 14 and Route 107;
- Preserve the carrying capacity of Route 107 as a minor arterial road;
- Protect sensitive resources and scenic areas; and
- Employ good site planning principles.

Forecasts show that traffic within this District will grow dramatically over the next 20 years. This will result in more pressure to develop land, thus bringing even more traffic into the area. It is in the Town's interest to accommodate development in this District, provided, however, that it does not adversely affect traffic flow nor endanger the public's investment in existing highways. Future developers should avoid adding to traffic problems through the use of access management techniques, multiple modes of transportation, speed reduction, or infrastructure improvements.

Nine future land use sub-areas exist within this District:

- Route 107 Low Density Service/Office;
- Waterman Road Industrial;
- Intermodal Industrial;
- Route 14 Industrial;
- Farmland Conservation/Limited Development;
- Residential;
- Low Density Residential;
- Foxville Hamlet; and
- Exit 3 Access.

In 1999 and 2000, the Planning Commission conducted a study of development alternatives for the Exit 3 area. The results are contained in a report entitled *Exit 3 Planning and Development Study*. Specific goals, policies, and recommendations for each of these nine sub-areas are included in the Study. A map showing each of these nine sub-areas is also included as part of the Study. Planners and developers should follow this Study in planning

projects within the Exit 3 Development District. This Study is included as part of this Plan, as follows:

## **EXIT 3 INTERCHANGE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT STUDY TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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### **Background and General Findings**

For 30 years Vermont has viewed its interstate highway system as an engine for economic development as well as a scenic gateway. The relative ease of access to and visibility from the Interstate has increased the value of land near the interchanges, including Exit 3 off I-89 in Royalton.

Today, with development pressures continuing, and 65 million people living within a six-hour drive of Royalton, the key challenge facing us is how to provide for economic growth at Exit 3 without destroying its working rural landscape. Exit 3 is becoming a magnet for development as travel along the Routes 107/14 corridor expands. Investors seek the location advantages of easy access and high pass-by traffic counts. The trend of development at other interchanges around Vermont is familiar: what began as a small gas station quickly expands into a convenience store, paving the way for additional gas stations and retail stores. This trend often robs vitality from nearby historic village centers.

The goal of the Town of Royalton is to be more specific and definitive about the characteristics of further development around this interchange before it is too late, through a collaborative public planning process. In 1998, the Town was awarded a grant from the State of Vermont to study Exit 3 and to develop a coordinated Town policy regarding its future growth. That effort resulted in an evaluation of development suitability and alternatives for this area. The planning principles set forth below were accepted.

## **Fundamental Planning Principles for the Exit 3 Interchange Area**

- Balance and preserve the fundamental rights of land ownership with respect to the public good.
- Plan development so that it will provide space for business growth and jobs, without detracting from the viability of the South Royalton, Royalton or Bethel business districts as economic and civic centers.
- Protect sensitive scenic and natural resources around the Exit.
- Encourage conservation and stewardship of land.
- Balance land development and growth with the availability of public services, infrastructure, and utilities.
- Allow development to occur, with carefully planned access management to minimize future traffic conflicts and enhance safety on the Routes 107 and 14 corridors.
- Ensure that transportation options (transit, rideshare, walking and biking) are integrated in public and private investments.
- Plan development without the necessity of either public water supply or sewage disposal services.

## **Planning Process**

This plan recognizes that not all land in close proximity to the Exit 3/Routes 107 /14 corridor is equally suited for development. As part of the process of evaluating the 1,000-acre project area, the Planning Commission analyzed existing land use patterns, physical characteristics, and natural resource values for the area. Existing data sources, aerial photographs, and field observations were used to prepare a series of resource maps that graphically depict physical land characteristics that are deemed important to the basic planning process. Maps were prepared for slopes, soils, wetlands, areas subject to flooding, existing land cover, structural use, deer wintering areas, prime agricultural land, surface water buffer areas, and other factors that influence the development capability of land. The analysis yielded a Development Suitability Map which reveals the relative suitability of land to support future growth. Conditions determined suitable for development were given low scores, while conditions noted as being very unfavorable for development were given high scores. From this, five suitability categories were created, ranging from slight to severe. This ranking system was not intended to be conclusive of all factors influencing the suitability of development, but rather as a general indicator using commonly accepted criteria.

All areas within the project were evaluated. The ranking resulted in the following:

- Slight Limitations- 22% of total area
- Slight to Moderate Limitations- 14% of total area
- Moderate Limitations- 26% of total area
- Moderate to Severe Limitations- 14% of total area

- Severe Limitations- 14% of total area

More detailed information regarding this analysis is contained in a report, *Development Suitability Scoring- Exit 3/ Route 107 Study Areas*, dated November, 1999, on file with the Royalton Planning Commission.

In December, 1999, and in June, 2000, the Planning Commission hosted informational meetings for the general public. The purpose was to learn about those values the community regarded as important in planning for future growth of the area. Based upon the information received, the Planning Commission reached the following conclusions:

1. Existing commercial uses are generally compatible with what is still largely a rural area along Route 107.
2. Future development, unless controlled, will create a strip mall effect.
3. Traffic on Route 107 is increasing, creating some access problems.
4. Future access to land should be compatible with corridor access management plans and use access management principles.
5. Service roads which provide access to one or more parcels are desirable.
6. Retail development within the Area should be very limited and only allowed if it will not impact the economic vitality of downtown South Royalton or Bethel.
7. Design standards or guidelines should be encouraged by the Planning Commission as means to ensure high quality and aesthetically pleasing development.
8. Retaining agricultural use and scenic character of highly visible areas should be a priority in planning for future changes in the Area. These highly visible areas are a high priority for conservation funding for the purchase of development rights.
9. Existing industrial uses along Waterman Road are appropriate for this area of town, but as truck traffic volumes grow on this road, improvements to the first 1,000 feet of the road, and its intersection with Route 107 will be required.

### **Route 107 Transportation Corridor Issues**

The Route 107 corridor is significant for a number of reasons. It is a very heavily traveled arterial highway, and forms part of a major transportation corridor between I-89 and Rutland as well as other points west. Traffic forecasts show that traffic on this corridor will grow dramatically in the next 20 years, as it acts as a funnel for many growing towns along the branches of the White River. Multi-modal planning, access management, speed reduction, and infrastructure improvements will have a role in preventing conflicts between land development and through traffic that have plagued many other communities.

**Existing Conditions** - Route 107 was built in the 1960s as a rural modern highway. The wide shoulders and lack of sharp curves allow cars and trucks to travel comfortably at high speeds. These high speeds are fine for roads with only minimal development, but create unsafe and uncomfortable environments as development occurs. Average daily traffic volume

for this segment of Route 107 was 7,400 in 1998, according to the Vermont Agency of Transportation. Volumes for 2020 are expected to increase approximately 26% to 9342 vehicles per day.

**Access Management** - Access management is essential for the Route 107 commercial area. This corridor will face great challenges as the area continues to grow in both traffic and roadside development. Before development occurs, a number of tools should be used which can minimize this impact:

1. Limit the total size of commercial area by identifying portions of the Route 107 corridor that are priorities for agriculture or residential use. The actual commercial frontage along the highway can be limited. Intermodal/industrial uses can occur along the railroad corridor, limiting the number of access points onto Route 107.
2. At the time of subdivision, a single access point for an entire existing parcel should be identified, at the safest location, promoting orderly traffic flow.
3. Identify locations for possible new roads, allowing for more integrated, orderly development of lands, and minimize curb cuts on Route 107.
4. Encourage driveways to be located opposite of existing driveways, creating four-way intersections rather than offset intersections.
5. For adjacent developments, consider connections between sites, shared parking and shared access, wherever physically feasible.

**Multi-modal Use on Corridor** - Facilities should be developed which encourage the use of multiple modes of transportation at appropriate locations, including public transit, ridesharing, bicycling, walking, and rail. Use of these modes may offset some of the projected growth in traffic demand, and could lessen the need for future road improvements.

**Speed Reduction** - As Route 107 becomes more developed, a lower speed limit would be appropriate. As changes are made to the road, these should be designed to encourage lower speeds. Lower speeds would actually increase the capacity of the road because of reduced safe following distances. A speed reduction would also make the corridor safer for many of the road's users, especially traffic turning into and out of developments.

**Infrastructure Improvements** - Despite efforts to manage traffic flow on this corridor through access management and speed limit reduction, there will likely be a need for the corridor's key intersections. These improvements could take a number of forms, such as turning lanes and truck climbing lanes. Intersection control could be in the form of traffic signals or roundabouts.

FOOTNOTE: The use of roundabouts is highly encouraged where feasible, as they offer numerous benefits in safety, energy efficiency, and air quality. They have a natural tendency to slow traffic down, whereas traffic signals often speed drivers up to try to make a green light. Roundabouts require lower maintenance, are less expensive to construct, and are more aesthetically pleasing than a traffic signal.

## **FUTURE LAND USE PATTERNS FOR THE EXIT 3 INTERCHANGE AREA**

As noted above, planning for the future growth of the Interchange Area has evolved from an analysis of existing conditions, community needs and public comment. The study area was analyzed through nine more specific uses:

1. Route 107 Low Density Service/Office;
2. Waterman Road Industrial;
3. Intermodal Industrial;
4. Route 14 Industrial;
5. Farmland Conservation/Limited Development;
6. Residential;
7. Low Density Residential;
8. Foxville Hamlet; and
9. Exit 3 Access.

### **Route 107 Low Density Service/Office**

This 93 acre area includes those properties on both sides of Route 107 extending generally from McCullough's Quick Stop property easterly to the land owned by Clifford of Vermont and including land currently occupied by the Texaco Gas Station and Lucky's Trailer Sales. Recent growth in this area has been largely service oriented. Several buildings in the area represent notable examples of vernacular design appropriate for the area.

### **Goals**

1. To maintain and promote to medium scale non-residential service and office development that reflects quality site and building design standards.
2. To incorporate access management techniques to minimize new access points, combine existing points where possible, and develop safe intersection nodes so that the function of Route 107 as a minor arterial road is not compromised.
3. To encourage development that does not compromise the viability of Royalton's two villages or downtown Bethel.

### **Policies**

1. Appropriate uses for this area are service establishments and office uses. Examples of such uses might include self-storage facilities, equipment rental, medical facilities, health clinics, community care homes, and insurance offices.
2. Primary retail, institutional, and civic uses should be located within the existing village areas or designated areas adjacent to them. Such uses include post offices, general stores, town offices, banks meeting places/churches, and clothing stores.

Retail developments in the Exit 3 area are generally discouraged, unless such activities are subordinate to a service or office use. Additional gas stations are inconsistent with the planning goals for this area.

3. Future development that unduly harms the economic viability of Royalton, South Royalton, and Bethel villages as economic centers for the Town is discouraged. Superstores, restaurants, and fast food establishments are inappropriate uses for this area.
4. Planned unit developments such as office parks, professional offices, and similar uses are appropriate uses, but should incorporate access management, service roads, and high quality New England vernacular architectural design. Notwithstanding the above, projects that cause, or contribute to unsafe conditions or unreasonable congestion, with respect to Route 107 and related roads, are discouraged.
5. Future developments should be planned with access management techniques to maintain or reduce traffic conflicts, avoid costly highway improvements, and preserve public investment in Route 107 as a minor arterial road.

### **Waterman Road Industrial Area**

This area covers approximately 135 acres of property with primary access to and egress from the intersection of Waterman Road and Route 107. Most existing development in this area is not visible from the rest of town, Interstate 89 and Route 107. A few single family residences and farmsteads are located in the area. Much of the land comprising the area is formerly farmland, or wooded. Slope gradient ranges from slight to moderate. Development constraint ranking is slight to moderate, and moderate. Much of the land has been converted to industrial uses since the opening of Interstate 89. The first 1,000 feet of Waterman Road and its intersection with Route 107 are poorly suited to the heavy truck traffic associated with industrial development.

### **Goals**

1. To provide for light industrial uses of a scale and design that complements the character and style of existing industrial/research facilities within the area.
2. To encourage appropriate road and intersection improvements to maintain safe and efficient access and egress for large trucks from this area.
3. To ensure that new growth in the area does not unnecessarily or unreasonably endanger public investment in Waterman Road, Route 107 or Route 14.
4. To encourage the development of a park-and-ride lot in an appropriate, safe, and visible location as close to the interchange as possible.

### **Policies**

1. Industrial uses are the preferred land uses for this area. Examples might be: low impact machine tool facilities, warehousing, research and development labs, manufacturing facilities, and small business Incubators.

2. Commercial uses, such as retail sales, gas stations, motor vehicle dealerships, stores, or uses predominately used by the general public are discouraged.
3. Future non-residential land use development should be planned and constructed to minimize adverse effects on existing residential uses within the area.
4. No land use should create or contribute to unsafe or hazardous conditions at the intersection of Waterman Road and Route 107. Where development is determined to create such a condition, the Town and the State of Vermont should seek a financial pro rata share or contribution from perspective permittees to cover costs for improvements.
5. Through truck traffic is discouraged from using Waterman Road as a Ashort cut@ between Route 14 north and Route 107. Developments that increase truck traffic on the upper end of Waterman Road are also discouraged.

### **Intermodal Industrial**

This area generally represents the low-lying area between Route 107 Low Density Service Area and the White River. The area, approximately 58 acres in size, is subdivided by the New England Central Railroad, with some areas subject to periodic flooding. This area is predominately undeveloped. The State of Vermont Highway Garage complex covers a portion of the area. Road access is limited to Route 107. Visibility from Route 107 and Interstate 89 is limited due to intervening land uses, elevations, and land cover.

Rail freight transportation is growing, both nationwide and in New England. This trend is likely to continue. Growth of this industry can reduce long-distance truck traffic, reduce wear and tear on heavily traveled highways, and move goods more efficiently. Planning should allow for rail dependent industries to locate to this area. The proposed Intermodal Industrial Area may be ideally suited to the intermodal freight industry. The area has few serious development constraints, is under-utilized, and any truck traffic generated from this location would have relatively short and easy access to Interstate 89. To accomplish such future development, a cooperative master planning effort between the Town, the State of Vermont, affected landowners, and New England Central Railroad will be necessary. As a part of this process, a review of alternatives and costs for rail siding/transfer facilities and a safe and single access should be included.

#### **Goals**

1. To provide for industrial uses benefiting from or dependent on rail facilities, particularly where increased rail freight will reduce truck traffic on the region's roads.
2. Create a detailed intermodal transportation plan for the area through a collaborative process.

#### **Policies**

1. Industrial uses which require rail access and intermodal transfer to trucks are the preferred land uses for this area and should be encouraged to locate here.

2. A single access road or a common interior loop road should be encouraged to provide safer access to and reduce loss of valuable land in this area.
3. Uses should be planned that do not create excessive noise or lighting levels which unreasonably impact neighboring land uses.
4. Uses which would create uneconomic or costly repair and maintenance of Route 107 and related roads are discouraged.
5. No industry should be promoted which creates or handles hazardous wastes or similar materials.

### **Route 14 Industrial**

The Route 14 Industrial Area covers a 19 acre area adjacent to Route 14 in Foxville and formerly known as the Drummond Steel facility. This property has been used as an industrial facility since the early 1970's. Access to the property is via a private way from Route 14 over an at-grade railroad crossing to the area. The current access should serve as a sole access for traffic to this development, enabling truck traffic to utilize a direct and short route to Interstate 89 and alleviating the need to route heavy trucks through the three villages. Until recently there was a rail siding from the New England Central Railroad mainline used by the property.

### **Goals**

1. To provide land for industrial activity in an area that has potential use of rail facilities for freight.
2. To ensure that a safe and efficient access road is maintained in its current location on Route 14.
3. To promote the retention of active agricultural land and to maintain the character of Royalton's two historic villages.
4. To evaluate the impact of any future use on the historic character of the immediate area.

### **Policies**

1. Industrial uses dependent on rail freight should be allowed and encouraged in this area, provided that access for heavy trucks is from Route 14 north of the underpass in Foxville.
2. Projects that generate excessive amounts of vehicular traffic, noise, dust, vibration, or similar interference with the Foxville hamlet area should be discouraged.

### **Farmland Conservation /Limited Development**

This area is the gateway to Royalton and Bethel from Interstate 89. The scenery is exceptional as viewed from Routes 14 and 107, and Interstate 89. Intensive structural

development of any type could significantly diminish scenic values. Land use policy should be directed at conservation of key areas. Compensation to landowners for the purchase of lands or interests is critically necessary if the overall goals for this area are to be accomplished. Purchase of development rights or other means to conserve these lands by the State or non-profit conservation land trusts should be a high priority. Project planning and site design should be carefully evaluated to ensure that goals and policies for this area could be achieved.

This area covers active farmland, farm complexes, and land subject to flooding immediate to the interchange. Much of the area contains primary agricultural soils. A sizable portion of this area is located within the flood plain of the White River. Public policy at the national and state levels clearly discourages using active farmland for non-agricultural uses. Vermont's Act 250 statutes generally prohibit large-scale developments or subdivisions from reducing the value of primary agricultural soils, unless no reasonable alternative exists.

### **Goals**

1. To promote the conservation of primary and secondary agricultural land, soils, and other farm related resources.
2. To manage future land use in a manner that maintains or enhances rural agricultural character, scenic amenities, and recreational resources.
3. To advance development of a protected gateway to Royalton with consideration of open space surrounded by historic and new compatible development.
4. To sustain agriculture where conditions enable these farms to remain viable.

### **Policies**

1. The preferred land uses are agriculture, non-commercial outdoor recreation, and accessory uses or structures related to these uses.
2. Where high value agricultural conditions are identified, only limited small-scale clustered or peripheral development should be encouraged, to protect such resources and to prevent unnecessary land fragmentation.
3. Construction of new homes or businesses within the limits of the 100 year flood plain is an inappropriate land use.
4. Construction of utilities, roads, or other physical modifications which reduce the productivity of agricultural activities should be discouraged.
5. Utilization of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Program (VHCP) or similar programs to acquire interests or easements on land should be pursued by the Town, in cooperation with landowners and conservation land trusts. Such easements are perpetual voluntary agreements between landowners and land trust where landowners receive compensation. As an alternative to conservation easements, rights of first refusal and fee simple purchase should be considered.
6. To ensure a balanced use of land, project designers are encouraged to concentrate

new development within a portion of a parcel offset by retention of open space or agricultural land.

## **Residential**

The Residential Area comprised a relatively large sub-area within the Exit 3 Interchange Area (approximately 315 acres or one-third of the total area). The Residential Area consists of a mixed pattern of land use. Single family residences, farmsteads, and meadows are the most dominant uses. Several small-scale businesses are located here as well, particularly along Route 107. The area consists of the northern or upper end of Waterman Road beyond the Industrial Area on both sides of the road, the area north of Eaton's Sugarhouse on Route 14, and the area in the vicinity of Christian Hill Road and Arctic Cat Road near the Royalton/Bethel Town line. Some of the area is within the 100 year flood plain of the White River, where little or no structural development has occurred. A sizeable portion of the open area on the northerly end of Waterman Road remains in agricultural use. The intensity of development has been primarily dependent on site limitations and availability of land.

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Primary agricultural soils are those soils with a high potential for growing food and forage crops. Such soils have high nutrient values and are highly responsive to the use of fertilizer.

## **Goals**

1. To support residential and small-scale non-residential uses at a density and design that maintains the rural character of the area.
2. To ensure that new land use complements the existing residential and open space uses of the area.

## **Policies**

1. Maintenance of a residential setting is encouraged.
2. In situations where areas are in agricultural use and where new uses are proposed, projects should be planned to minimize the potential conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses. Planning concepts should include:
  - locating structures or development on the least productive soils;
  - utilizing cluster planning principles to conserve the maximum feasible amount of farmland ; and
  - design the layout of roads and other improvements in ways that do not unnecessarily reduce the use of farmland.
3. Non-residential uses, including service businesses, professional offices, and inns, are acceptable uses provided they do not materially conflict with residential uses and are relatively small in size. Conversely, retail enterprises and service uses drawing on a regional market are inappropriate in this area.

## **Low Density Residential**

This 184 acre area is comprised of the upland area along the north side of Route 107 Low Density Service/ Office Area, extending from near the Royalton/Bethel line to I-89. The area is predominately residential in character. Other current land uses include forest land and old field growth. Access from Route 107 to most of this area is very difficult due to steep grades. Presently few roads access this area. This area includes woodland currently owned by the Town of Royalton. Major constraints for development are lack of an existing access and the relatively high cost of constructing new roads into the area.

### **Goal**

1. To continue low density residential and open space type uses.

### **Policies**

1. Single family residences are the preferred structural uses for this area. Development should be at low densities and be sensitive to the natural resource values present, including wildlife habitats.
2. New development on property owned by the Town should not begin until the citizens of Royalton have had an opportunity to evaluate the various options for future use of the land.
3. Home businesses are acceptable uses provided that they are customary in residential areas, do not change the residential character of the immediate area, and do not cause undue hardship on roads and other community services.
4. Shared access onto Route 107 or other public highways is encouraged.

## **Foxville Hamlet**

This area consists of a group of buildings along Route 14 from Route 107 from Route 107 to the railroad underpass. This area has served as the location of several homes, and small businesses. This hamlet area contains some historic buildings which are worthy of preservation. There are some opportunities for uses to locate here. Some areas along the White River are subject to flooding. Land east of Route 14 has the greatest potential for new development.

### **Goal**

1. To retain the traditional character of Foxville, allowing for the development of a variety of village uses.

### **Policies**

1. The density of development should reflect the existing settlement pattern and physical land capability. Densely settled development should be encouraged, where practical.
2. Design features which contribute to the amenity values should be employed. These

could include provision of sidewalks, trees, public open spaces, traffic calming measures, and the identification of historic landmarks.

3. Mixed uses, including small-scale retail and service establishments and housing, should be encouraged.

### **Exit 3 Access**

This area includes land owned by the State of Vermont adjacent to I-89. It includes land used for the entrance and exit ramps to I-89 leading to and from Route 107. Since this land has been permanently dedicated for highway use, no specific goals or policies have been expressed. Development of a Park and Ride facility within this area, or close by, would be beneficial to commuters and address a regional need.

## **DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR THE EXIT 3 INTERCHANGE AREA**

### **Parking and Parking Lots**

- promote parking behind commercial and industrial buildings to screen parking along Routes 14 and 107;
- encourage the consolidation and sharing of parking lots to save land and to minimize haphazard distribution of unconnected parking area serving adjacent premises.
- create new roads and interconnected parking lots behind commercial and industrial buildings to reduce traffic congestion.
- consolidate scattered, disorganized curb cuts into a smaller number of clearly defined entrances for safety.

### **Landscape and Site Planning**

- consider locating new buildings or additions close to the roadway, with parking and service areas screened to the rear. This will create the traditional street line of building facades, forming an attractive edge to the roadway, instead of allowing the roadside to be dominated by large areas of parking.
- use fences and other traditional devices to define a property's relationship to the road.
- encourage the planting of substantial trees along the roadside to help shade and give definition to the road.
- consider new building designs that do not result in large, bulky, box-like masses, and large scale buildings down by grouping them into a series of smaller, attached structures.
- design new buildings that complement the traditional buildings already in this area. Incorporate design elements that fit the context of the area through scale, massing,, roof shape, orientation, shape, spacing, and exterior materials.

- promote building height of at least two stories to enable more efficient use of land and multiple uses.
- maintain lower density of development with lot area to coverage ratio not to exceed 50%.
- minimize alteration of natural site features.
- design projects to preserve existing fence lines, tree lines, hedgerows and stone walls, whenever possible.
- design interior and access roads with the scale of the project to help discourage excessive speeds.
- in areas of public view, screen outdoor storage of trash.

### **Signage and Lighting**

- observe good design practices to provide light levels and distribution appropriate to the use of the site and compatible with the character of the neighborhood.
- minimize glare and light beyond the boundaries of the site.
- utilize fixtures to reduce glare; consider the use of cut-off fixtures or shielded fixtures to direct light downward.
- design signs and advertising features which are compatible with the surroundings, enhance the visual environment, are harmonious in color, material and lighting with the use to which it relates, and are non-distracting to motorists and neighboring land uses.
- discourage excessively large signs or numerous signs for a single or related land uses.

## **LIST OF MAPS**

As part of the Exit 3 Planning and Development Study, the maps listed below were prepared by the Royalton Planning Commission. Accordingly, these maps are located as part of the Study. Copies of these maps are available for review at the Royalton Town Offices.

Base Orthophoto

Existing Land Use/Cover

Hydric Soils

Slopes

Development Suitability

Primary Agricultural Soils

Commercial/Industrial Buildings Over 2,000 Square Feet

Future Development Areas

## **STUDY APPENDIX**

### **Royalton Property in Land Trust**

Dumville Trust - TH #22, Waterman Road

Spaulding, James H. & Tina M. - TH #35, Gilman Road

Spaulding, James H. & Tina M. - TH #35, Gilman Road

Mastine, Bruce & Kelly - TH #4 & TH #46, North Road

McCullough Farm Partnership - TH #4, North Road

Wells Fargo Bank - TH 922, Waterman Road

Dreisbach, Timothy & Patricia - TH #24, Morgan Road

Slattery, Robert J. - VT Rte 110

Digby, Edward L. & Jeannette M. - TH #4 1, Harlow Road

Whitcomb, Lawrence - VT Rte I 10

Honigford Tom, O'Connor, Sharon, Gerald & Claire -SA #1, South Windsor Street